

# THE LAST ILLUSION OF PAIGE WHITE

VANESSA McCAUSLAND

## Discussion Questions

In order to provide reading groups with the most informed and thought-provoking questions possible, it is sometimes necessary to reveal certain aspects of the storyline. If you have not finished reading, you may want to do so before reviewing this guide.

1. “The desire to be loved is the last illusion. Give it up and you will be free.” The book opens with a Margaret Atwood quote. Discuss what this might mean and the significance of illusions in the book.
2. The tree cathedral plays an important role in the story and religion is a theme. What do you feel the novel says about religion, power, and influence through the character of Mr. White?
3. “Does a home etch itself into a body?” Discuss the ideas of home and belonging explored through Jane’s character.
4. “There is always someone, if only ever so slightly, ever so minutely, on the outer.” Fitting in, and the need to be loved, are central to being a teenage girl, which mirrors the pressures users face on social media. This novel is a critique of these platforms, but are there any merits to using them? Is there a middle ground?
5. “[T]hat we would exist in our mirror worlds.” The mirror is a recurrent symbol. The reflections of the lake being a mirror and the idea of social media as a mirror into which we gaze. The idea of Paige’s “beyond” is also a place where her life is reflected back to her. How does this recurring imagery impact what you’ve taken away from this novel?
6. “I clung to the idea that there was something brave and idealistic about being yourself despite the overpowering influence of natural selection.” How did you feel about the character of Audrey?
7. “These are not the things I miss. I don’t know why when I was alive the small things weren’t enough to make me happy.” The small but beautiful things sometimes get lost in the business of life. What are they for you?
8. “Who were you now, Paige White? Beyond the pretty pictures. Maybe there was nothing beyond the surface.” Paige is a complex character, with her parents viewing her one way, Jane viewing her another, and Andy coming from a very specific point of view when he reflects on his wife. How did you feel about Paige in the end?
9. At the beginning of the book did you have ideas about who the anonymous narrator was?
10. How did you feel about and interpret the ending? Did it shock you or change your view about any of the characters?