



What Becomes Us

a novel by
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ORIGINAL PROVOCATIVE READING

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What Becomes Us
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A guide for readers

There is a lot to talk about in *What Becomes Us*, from the choices families make to our roles within communities to the legacies we've inherited in our national history. We hope these questions help shape your conversations with fellow readers.

- Did Evie do the right thing by running away from her husband? Did she have a choice?
- Evie cares a lot about being nice and polite. Do you think these traits hurt her or helped her in the novel? Has trying to be nice and polite generally hurt or helped you in your life?
- Why do you think there is so much attention paid to food and hunger in the novel?
- Do you think Evie and Mateo's relationship will last? What do they have going for them and against them?
- In *What Becomes Us*, tensions about terrorism, religion and war divide the small town in the year right after 9/11. Do you think these tensions have grown worse or gotten better in the years since 9/11?
- How would things have been different if Evie had maintained clearer boundaries with the new friends and families she encountered? What do you think about involving yourself with the marriages, the parents and the children around you?
- What do you think about Joan, the major activist, in the book? Did she do the right thing in the end? What other choices could she have made under the circumstances?
- Mary Rowlandson's captivity narrative is a story of survival in the wilderness. These kinds of stories, from *Survivor* to *Into The Wild* are extremely popular. Why do you think we're so attracted to wilderness survival tales?
- Have you ever thought about a fetus describing their mother's life? If you've ever been pregnant—or thought about being pregnant—what would yours say about you?

The artful argument.
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