



Colorado Book Club Resource

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR *WE NEVER ASKED FOR WINGS* BY VANESSA DIFFENBAUGH

1. Maria Elena raised Alex and Luna almost as if she were their mother, even calling them “my babies,” and yet she makes the incredibly difficult decision to return to Mexico and leave them alone with Letty. How do you think she justified that to herself? Do you agree with her decision? Why or why not?
2. The novel alternates between Letty’s perspective and Alex’s. Which did you find more interesting? Why?
3. From drinking heavily and working multiple jobs to leaving her children alone in the middle of the night, it’s no secret that Letty is struggling as a mother. Were you able to sympathize with her in spite of her flaws? How does Letty evolve as a mother as the book goes on?
4. Do you think Letty’s decision to hide her pregnancy from Wes was justified? Why or why not? What about the way she conceals Wes’s identity from Alex?
5. By dating Letty, Rick takes on a greater responsibility. What does that say about his personality? Do you find him to be a relatable character?
6. When Alex shows Yesenia Enrique’s feathers, he discovers a note that reads: “For my Alex, Make wings.” From Enrique’s feather art to Alex’s migratory project, there is a lot of flight-themed imagery and references throughout the book. How do you think it relates to the challenges the characters face?
7. Given the flight motif, why do you think the author chose the title *We Never Asked for Wings*?
8. Even though Letty slowly works to pull her life together, at different points in the novel she comes across as beaten down, and she often struggles with fear and self-confidence. At the same time, Alex is unwilling to accept that he (or Yesenia) deserves anything but the best education, no matter the risk involved. What do you think explains that difference in their outlooks?
9. "Yesenia was not a U.S. citizen. All her life she'd been here illegally, and she hadn't even known it. Alex didn't know what to say." Yesenia and Carmen reflect the reality of millions of people living in America without documentation today. How do their experiences in the novel shed light on broader social issues? Did you learn anything from the challenges they face?
10. Were you surprised by the way things worked out in the end? If you could change one thing about the novel, what would it be?

Questions from the author's website.



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