



Colorado Book Club Resource

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR STELLA MARIS BY CORMAC MCCARTHY

1. What do we know about Alicia's biography and how she came to Stella Maris?
2. Why does Alicia refuse to talk about her brother?
3. What is significant or unusual about the structure of Chapter 1?
4. Why is Alicia interested in the evolution of biological systems?
5. Where does Alicia's money come from? What does her handling of the money suggest about the nature of her life?
6. What is the symbolic and narrative function of the violin Alicia describes acquiring in Chapter 2?
7. What are the correlations between historical developments and the important developments in Alicia's family life? Why are these correlations significant?
8. What is the significance of the dreams Alicia shares with Dr. Cohen? Why does one get more narrative attention than the other?
9. What can the reader infer about Alicia's relationship with her family at this point in the narrative?
10. How has the dynamic between Alicia and Dr. Cohen evolved in Chapter 4?
11. What is the significance of Miss Vivian? How do her concerns echo with previously discussed themes in the novel?
12. Why does Dr. Cohen continue to ask Alicia questions about her romantic life? What are the correlations between the unrequited love she hints at, and her broader views of the world?
13. What are Alicia's views about God? How have they developed in Chapter 5?
14. What is the correlation between math and magic in this chapter? Why did Alicia name a part of her mathematical thesis "the Prestige?"
15. What does the lengthy discussion about drowning oneself reveal about Alicia's mental state? Is it paradoxical, and if so, in what ways?
16. What does Alicia's romantic longing for her brother suggest about her relationship to society?



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17. What is the correlation between language and mental illness that Alicia posits in the final chapters?
18. What is "the end of something" that Alicia is referring to in the final line of the novel (190)?

Discussion questions adapted from BookRags.com.



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