

CALIFORNIA
By Edan Lepucki

Questions and Topics for Discussion

1. What meaning do Frida's artifacts hold for her? How do they serve as a connection to her former life? If you had to abandon your life, what sentimental items might you keep?
2. Do you think Frida and Cal's interactions with August and the Millers helped to keep them sane in the wilderness? How do you think their experience would have been different had they been totally alone, without other human contact?
3. Have you ever had a relationship, romantic or otherwise, that could have withstood the pressures of isolation that Frida and Cal's marriage is subject to?
4. Do you think Cal and Frida were unprepared for what they found when they left LA? Why or why not? Do you think there was anything they could have done to prepare themselves better?
5. After four months of being in the wilderness, Frida thinks her husband sees her as "a problem to solve" (14). How do you think Cal would have described this same scene? Do you think he actually felt this way about his wife? Why or why not?
6. What motivates Micah to do what he does? Is he a monster, or is he simply deranged by his radical beliefs? Why does violence attract him so?
7. How realistic does the author's vision of the future seem? Do you imagine the world devolving in this way? Or do you imagine it will turn out differently?
8. What is so seductive about communities, be it superficial ones, like The Land, or natural ones, like family? What does community mean for each of the characters in *California*?
9. What role does loss—or the fear of loss—play in the novel?
10. Why do you think the characters are willing to give up so much for safety? Do you think the sacrifices are worth it? Why or why not?
11. What are the characters' differing views on parenthood, and how do they propel the events in the novel?
12. How does the book's shifting perspective help you to understand these characters and their relationships?

13. How does the author depict gender roles in the novel? Do you think these roles make sense given the nature of the society? Why or why not?
14. What do you make of Frida and Cal's marriage at the end of the novel? How do you think it's changed over the course of the book?
15. Do you think Frida and Cal's child will live a happy life?