

Read Global: *Searching for Sylvie Lee* Questions

Adapted from questions supplied by publisher William Morrow (a HarperCollins imprint).

Ice breakers: On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate this novel?

Which character would you like to have dinner with?

1. How do the members of the Lee family deal with being measured against stereotypes and language barriers?
2. How is this immigrant family like others you've met or read about? What about their experiences do you think are universal or unique?
3. How does Kwok represent the different languages the chapters for each narrator? Did any idioms or word orders surprise you or make you think? Why do you think Kwok chose to depict language this way?
4. This novel says a great deal about the influence our families can have on us. How did Amy and Sylvie's different upbringings shape them and their choices?
5. Amy and Sylvie are so different—how are they the same?
6. Did your perception of Ma change when you read her chapters? How did she appear through others' eyes in comparison to how she sees herself?
7. Each of the narrators in the novel describes things from her own viewpoint. Do you think any of them are reliable narrators?
8. What is the price of the American dream? Who pays for it? How does the lifestyle in Europe compare?
9. Why didn't Lukas or Grandma keep in touch with Sylvie? And why didn't Sylvie?
10. Amy and Sylvie perceive the Netherlands differently. How do their impressions of the landscape and the people --- especially Filip and Lukas --- demonstrate their own characters?
11. Has reading this novel deepened your understanding of the implications of casual racism, even toward well-integrated people? Did any instances in the novel surprise you?
12. Different men love Sylvie in this novel. How did their love differ, and why?
13. How did your impression of Helen change as you learned more about the family's story?
14. Did you have any preconceptions about Sylvie's fate? Were you sure she was alive or dead throughout or did you change your mind?
15. What did you think of Sylvie and Willem's birthmarks?
16. There are so many secrets that the characters keep to themselves. What do you wish they had shared with each other, and how might this have changed the plot?
17. Do you think the novel's title, "Searching for Sylvie Lee," has multiple meanings?

Closing: Did this discussion change your 1-10 rating for this book?