

ESCAPE UNDER THE FOREVER SKY

a novel by Eve Yohalem

"Riviting."
—Booklist

"A page-turner."
—Chicago Sun-Times

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Master List Title

* * DISCUSSION QUESTIONS * * * * *

1. In the beginning of the novel, Lucy believes her mother cares more about her career than she does about her. Do you agree with her assessment? What about Lucy's father and his career? Do you believe Lucy's experience with her parents is particularly unusual given their responsibilities in the workplace? In what ways do her parents grow and reevaluate their family responsibilities because of Lucy's kidnapping?
2. Explain the significance of the title, *Escape Under the Forever Sky*. In your opinion, does it accurately describe the events and relationships portrayed in the novel?
3. Consider Lucy's relationship with the wild; why does she feel so connected to the animals there? What does her connection with these animals teach her about relationships in general? Have you ever had a close relationship with an animal or pet? What was it about that relationship that made it special? Explain why Lucy feels free to "just be herself" when she is in the bush. Is there a place that makes you feel that way? What role does Dahnle, the park ranger, play in nurturing Lucy's commitment and connection to the wild?
4. Fear guides much of Lucy's mother's decisions regarding Lucy's experiences. Why is she fearful for Lucy's safety? Consider the incident at the market; though each of them blame each other, do you believe one of them is right? Why? Describe your observations of the relationship between Lucy and her mother. Do you consider them a strong family? In what ways are they similar or different than your own?
5. Early in the novel, Lucy states, "Tana is everything I'm not: calm, patient, beautiful, charming." How does Lucy see herself? Do you agree with her self-assessment? How does the time spent working to escape help Lucy come to better understand herself? Discuss the character traits that allow Lucy to ultimately persevere. Do you share any personality traits that are similar to hers? If so, what are they?
6. What are some of the ways in which living in Ethiopia is different from living in your country? What are some of the similarities?
7. Consider the variety of settings for *Escape Under the Forever Sky*; name the three places you believe to be most important to the story. Using textual evidence from the book, explain why you find them to be significant to the overall story structure.
8. The curator of the National Museum of Ethiopia tells Lucy, "Nationality and religion are just politics. We are all one species." What do you think he means by that? Do you agree or disagree? Explain your position.
9. While discussing Dawit, Tana's father's new driver, Lucy tells her friend, "He gives me the creeps." What is significant about Lucy's gut reaction toward her captor? Have you ever had a similar experience where you felt "warned" by your instincts? How did you resolve the situation?
10. Compare Teddy's life in Guge to his life at school in Addis Ababa. How do these differences shape him as a person? Though they are poor, his parents insist he receive the best schooling possible. What do his parents hope to accomplish by ensuring his education is exemplary?
11. Consider how race is portrayed in the novel; in what ways does the author help readers understand the complexities of racial relationships and expectation throughout the world? What role does race play in your life?
12. Did you expect Abba and the rest of the villagers to believe Markos or Lucy? Why?
13. Tana describes what it's like being a girl in Ethiopia: "Lucy, if you think it is bad to be a girl here, just imagine what it is like to be a woman. Men are in charge of everything . . . When I grow up, they will all expect me to behave a certain way just because that is how it has always been. I hate it." How does that compare to how girls are treated in your country?
14. Consider the standoff between Lucy and her captors in the wild; why do you think the lions surround Lucy? In what ways is this gesture symbolic of Lucy's connection to animals?

