



THE HARE

A NOVEL

MELANIE FINN

.....
Reader Guide: Questions and Topics for Discussion
.....

1. In what ways is the title fitting?
2. Gran's theory of "Fate" is continually mentioned throughout the book. What is it, and what effect did this philosophy have on Rosie's life and her decisions? Do you think Rosie held the same belief of Fate throughout her life? Why or why not?
3. We see Rosie being relentlessly plagued by the symptoms of menopause later in her life. What effect did the constant reminder of her physical discomfort have on you as the reader?
4. With Rosie, we see a juxtaposition of violence against animals with violence against humans. Talk about the instances of violence that involve Rosie, and compare how they are similar and different. Are they all in the name of survival, from Rosie's point of view? Do you think violence is ever justifiable?
5. Five years have passed at the start of the section "The Cemetery, 1991," which opens with the line:
 "... Rosie paid attention, for animals always took the way of least resistance."
What role do animals play in this novel? How did being in the rural, natural landscape of Vermont shape Rosie? Why do you think the dog Hook received her own section in the book?
6. Discuss how the main character's name evolves. When and why do you think this happens? What effect do you think a change of name had on Rosie? What other characters change their names and why?
7. Rosie is haunted by the interactions she had with "The Giggle Man" during her childhood. What effect did this have on her? How do you think this experience of Rosie's fits in with the other instances of violence against women and children that occur in the novel? The author has stated she was in part inspired by the Supreme Court confirmation hearing of Brett Kavanaugh, when Dr. Christine Blasey Ford alleged that Kavanaugh had sexually assaulted her some 36 years earlier: How does Ford's experience tie in with the themes of *The Hare*?



THE HARE

A NOVEL

MELANIE FINN

Reader Guide: Questions and Topics for Discussion

8. Would you consider this a feminist novel? What are the various ways that women's lives are depicted at various ages? How does this novel explore the idea of womanhood?
9. Although Rosie is an art student, it's not until she sees *The Hunt of the Unicorn* (the unicorn tapestries at The Cloisters), the work of Umberto Boccioni at MoMA, and Jan van Eyck's fictional painting (which brings to mind his *Portrait of Giovanni Arnolfini and his Wife 1434*) in Hobie's personal collection, that we see her having a visceral reaction to art. Why do you think these particular pieces moved her?
10. Social class and classism — in America and throughout history, such as “droit de seigneur,” “serfs and the nobility” — are continually explored throughout the novel. What were some of Rosie's experiences with classism from childhood to adulthood?
11. There are multiple instances of Rosie stealing money. From whom did she steal, and what are the various things she did with the money? Do you think she was wrong or right in these instances?
12. What do you think about Rosie's reaction when, after decades have passed, she is reunited with her teenage boyfriend? Why do you think she reacts this way, and do you think her reaction is fair? In what ways is Rosie's reaction related to how she feels about herself and her own life?
13. Discuss the instances where we see Rosie realizing how differently others viewed her, compared to how she viewed herself as a young woman. What are the differences? Do you think Rosie's life would have turned out differently if she had thought of herself more like others had? What decisions do you think Rosie would have made differently?
14. Discuss the ending of the novel: were you surprised by Rosie's actions? Did you expect a different ending? What do you imagine will happen next for each of the characters?