

The

FICTION
WRITER

DISCUSSION GUIDE

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The prologue and the epilogue both begin with "Last night I dreamt I went to Malibu again." What is the significance of this line? How does your perspective on it change from the prologue to reading it again in the epilogue?
2. Olivia mentions the idea of "writer brain," that as a fiction writer she is always seeing stories in situations even where they don't exist. Did you think the "gothic mystery" she found herself in in Malibu was real or imagined? Did your perspective change as the story went on?
3. Compare and contrast Olivia to Angelica to Clara. Is Olivia really a thief? Is Clara? Is Angelica? Do you agree with Olivia that a story can't really belong to any writer? Why or why not?
4. Discuss the meaning of the title. Who is the fiction writer? Consider also the line between truth and fiction, and how that plays a role in the novel.
5. Charley tells Olivia that "there are no new stories." Do you agree or disagree with this statement? What makes a story unique or new from a story that came before it? Did you notice any similarities between *The Fiction Writer* and Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca*? How are the novels also different?
6. What is the role of the excerpts from *The Wife* in the novel? Who did you believe was the writer of these excerpts? Did your perspective on this change throughout the book and why/how?
7. Compare and contrast Ash and Noah. Does Olivia make the right choice when she leaves Ash at LA LIT and goes to see Noah instead? Why or why not?
8. How does Olivia's family history, specifically her mother's accident, play a role in this story? How do you think Olivia's life, and her experience in Malibu, may have turned out differently if her mother hadn't died in that accident years earlier?
9. Discuss Rose Asherwood as a character. Why is she important to the story? Why do you think she tells Olivia that "magicians saw beautiful women in half or make them disappear?"
10. How does wealth and class play a role in the novel? Discuss how they affect both Olivia's and Ash's lives and the outcomes of their stories.
11. From the very first line, Malibu plays a huge role in this novel. Discuss the significance of the setting. Why do you think the novel largely takes place in Malibu? How does it contribute to the plot and overall theme?