

Book Club Questions/Discussion

1. At the centre of *Just Pretending* are ideas of identity and belonging/not belonging, abandonment and loss, regret and insecurity. How do you see these themes play out through the collection?
2. What was your favourite story? Favourite character?
3. In the past, most Indigenous societies were matrilineal and matriarchal. How does this collection, which focuses on women's stories, and in particular stories about motherhood, contrast this history with the now patriarchal present?
4. The title of the collection could mean a number of different things – what do you think it means, and do you think the title story “Just Pretending” is the best reflection of it?
5. Many of these women feel lost, and separated from their cultural identity and heritage. Looking at the treatment of Indigenous peoples in Canada's past, how do we see these characters attempting to reconcile – with themselves, their past, and others?
6. Stories play a large part in this collection of short stories (ironically enough). What is the importance of traditional stories in shaping Indigenous spirituality, and how does this manifest itself throughout the book?
7. These are powerful stories that, while fictional, portray very real situations. End the conversation with a discussion about the themes of this book, and how they connect to events that are happening in Canada and the rest of the world right now.