



Stranger in the Lake Readers Questions. And please note :: spoilers ahead! Proceed accordingly.

1. People in Lake Crosby have a lot to say about Charlotte and Paul's marriage, and they make all sorts of judgements as to whether or not her feelings for him are true. Even Charlotte admits that her love is motivated by things other than love: "I married him because I love him, and I love him for all the things he provides... And really, when you think about it, isn't security just another word for love?" Do you agree? Or are her feelings for him clouded by his wealth?
2. When another woman's body is found under Paul's dock, Charlotte jumps to his defense—even after she realizes it was the same woman they spoke to the day before in town. What do you think her real motivations were for backing Paul up on his lie? Would you have done the same in her position? Do you feel that any of her lies for him were justified?
3. Much of what occurs in this story stems from events of the past. Are the characters' recollections of what happened reliable? Why or why not? What does this suggest about how time can influence both our memory and our perspective, and how the past shapes our future?
4. Consider the motifs of privilege and poverty in the story. What do they seem to suggest about how money (having it, lacking it) can shape our fears and priorities, even our emotions? Charlotte trades "Pretty things for a man in love with his first wife. A house filled with food to sleep in the same bed as a liar." What is the relationship between money and morality? Where does one draw the line?
5. Who is responsible for the death of Bobby Holmes? Explain. How was his disappearance treated by the police, by people in town? What roles did reputation, gossip, money, and power play?
6. Why does Charlotte decide it's so crucial for Paul to tell the police about his mother's role in Sienna's death? Does turning in his mother absolve him of his own transgressions?
7. According to Charlotte, "Money can't buy happiness or bravery. It can't save a marriage or bring a drug dealer back from the dead. But in these United States of America, especially here in the South, it can keep a white man out of prison." Do you agree? Discuss.
8. Despite Charlotte's feelings for Paul, ultimately she decides to leave him, and she takes nothing with her—not even her diamond ring—when she goes. This lands Charlotte right back where she started: destitute and living in a trailer. Think back to the first question, about Charlotte's true feelings for Paul; is your answer still the same?
9. Were you surprised by the conclusion of the book, and the ultimate reveal of Sienna's killer? Why or why not? How did your opinion of each of the characters change by the story's end?
10. What do you think happens to the characters after the novel is over? Do you think Paul will find peace? What will Charlotte's life look like?

Thanks for reading!
Make sure to check out MY DARLING HUSBAND,
coming December 28, 2021 from Park Row Books.