

Forsaken Trust

Discussion Questions

1. Ohio has been referred to as the heart of the opioid epidemic. NBC discusses Montgomery County, where the author resides, as the “the over-dose capitol of America” and references it as a “mass casualty event” (<http://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/mass-casualty-event-ohio-county-now-tops-u-s-overdose-n773936>). While much of *Forsaken Trust* takes place in the fictitious town of Wallace Lake, addiction(s) and the issues that surround it in Ohio are represented through different points of view. How did the novel help you to consider these complicated issues from an angle that you might not have thought of before? Why do you think Ohio is at the heart of the opioid crisis and does the novel offer insight into the problem?

2. Many characters in the novel struggle with addiction(s). Which characters earned your sympathy and which didn't? Why? How would you characterize Luce Hansen's relationship with alcohol over the course of the novel and how does it add to the novel's conversation about addiction(s)?

3. Throughout *Forsaken Trust*, different types of mother/daughter relationships are represented. What are some of these mother/daughter relationships and why do you think it plays such a significant role in the novel?

4. Luce Hansen and Colby Sanders have a tense, and, at times, difficult relationship. Do you think Luce's feelings toward her boss are justified regarding their previous case and the lack of her job promotion? Why or why not?

5. How do the themes of betrayal and loyalty function together in the novel?
6. How does Ava Washington's portrayal and experiences in the novel mirror the lives of the women found in the barn? In what ways are these instances similar? How are they different?
7. Luce struggles throughout the book with the concept of justice. How would you define Luce's ideas of justice at the beginning of the novel? In what ways is she disappointed in justice inside law enforcement and outside of it? How does she see justice working (or not working) outside of her career? By the close of the novel, do you think Luce has come to terms with her ideas about justice?
8. Luce particularly struggles with the way justice is dealt in the cases of Sadie Reid and Albert Finley. The Ohio laws are clear, particularly in regards to Sadie's charges. Why is Luce so conflicted with these two characters and their charges at the end of the novel? Do you think Sadie and Albert were treated fairly by the justice system? Why or why not?
9. What role does water play in *Forsaken Trust*? How does it work as a centering point for Luce Hansen? In what ways does water help her? Are there instances where water works against her?