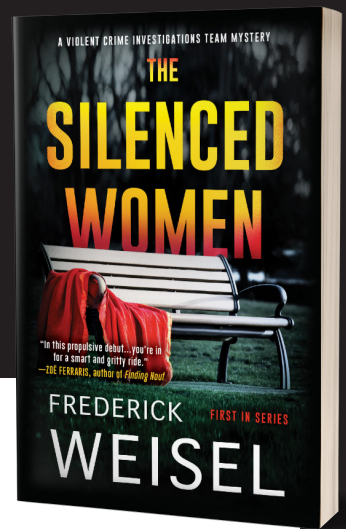


THE SILENCED WOMEN

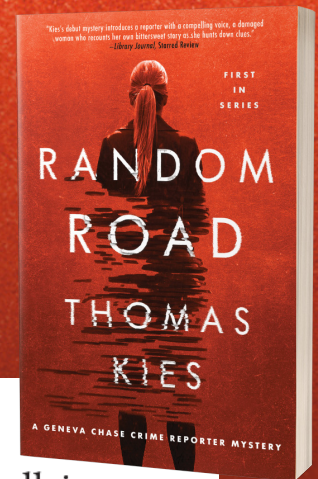
DISCUSSION GUIDE



1. In this mystery, the killer's identity is revealed early on. This structure makes the novel not a traditional mystery "whodunit" but a "howcatchem". Did this difference influence your enjoyment of the novel?
2. Eddie Mahler has imaginary conversations with a victim who was killed. Why do you think he does this? What clues does he learn from these conversations?
3. What does each of the five detectives contribute to the investigation?
4. Throughout the story Eddie Mahler suffers severe migraines and accompanying hallucinogenic scotoma. Have you or anyone you've known had migraines? Was your experience with them similar to Mahler's?
5. Eden Somers, who has a background as an FBI analyst, is trying to learn a different craft of criminal investigation and interrogation. What does she learn in these investigations? What does she bring to these investigations from her FBI history?
6. Mahler's former girlfriend, Kate Langley, asks him what he wants. She says, "My therapist says we're not grown-up until we can ask ourselves that question and honestly answer it." Do you think that's true? What do you think Mahler wants?
7. Retired detective Tommy Woodhouse tells Eden that the Latin root of the word "arrogance" is related to the word "rogation," which is prayer. "Arrogance" is the inverse and means to presume to not need prayer. How does Ben Thackrey's arrogance impair his judgment?
8. How is the victim Elise Durand portrayed in the novel—through her employer, friends, mother, and Ben Thackrey?
9. Which characters did you root for in the novel?
10. Detective Daniel Rivas recalls his Aunt Malena telling him, "When you get older, Danny, love looks different. It's still there, if you're smart or lucky, but now it's in her eyes, or a joke between you, un chiste, or the food you make for each other. The trick is to see what the love is in your life and not to expect what it isn't." Do you think that's true?
11. Police Chief Truro tells Eddie Mahler that you can understand what eighteenth-century artists were trying to do by paying attention to the "quality of light" in the paintings. Later Mahler tells Eden to look for the quality of light in her investigation of the killing of young women. What do you think he means?
12. This novel uses actual names of places in Northern California—in Santa Rosa, Sonoma County, and San Francisco. Did the descriptions help you visualize them?
13. Which scenes in the novel affected you the most? How did they affect you?

RANDOM ROAD

Discussion Guide

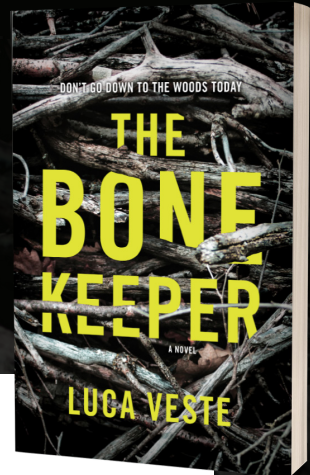


1. When Geneva first receives the anonymous call in *Random Road*, she decides not to tell the police. What would you have done? How does her decision shape what happens next?
2. Mike loses Geneva's esteem when he warns her that Kevin is an alcoholic, though he quickly backpedals. How do you think the stigma against addiction affects the path to recovery?
3. Geneva considers her affair with Frank to be about equivalent to Ted's swinging. Do you think she's right? What are the biggest similarities and differences?
4. Even when she's not talking on the record, Geneva gets evasive answers from most people who might know something about the murders. Who did you find the most suspicious? Was there anyone you didn't question who turned out to be important?
5. As much as Geneva hates the consequences of her drinking, she doesn't try very hard to stay on the wagon. What do you think drives her addiction most? Do you think Kevin shares that motivation? Jim Brenner?

6. It's clear that Geneva and Ruth don't get along. What would you consider their primary source of tension? Do you think it changes the way either of them interact with Caroline?
7. Do you agree with Ruth that Kevin's pride and costly health insurance prevented him from seeking help for his pain? Can you think of any other reasons he might want to avoid hospitals?
8. Though she falters in many other aspects of her life, Geneva staunchly maintains her journalistic integrity. Did you think it was realistic for Mike to ask her to downplay the role of the teachers to help his son get into a good school?
9. What do you think of Geneva's final thoughts on death? Do tragedies happen for a reason, or do we just assign them meaning when everything is over?

THE BONE KEEPER

DISCUSSION GUIDE



1. *The Bone Keeper* centers on a childhood urban legend that chillingly comes to life. Do you remember any urban legends from your childhood? What were they? What would it be like if they were suddenly real?
2. If you were Louise Henderson and a victim told you the Bone Keeper had attacked them, how would you react? Would you believe what the victim says, or would you chalk the admission up to trauma?
3. What do you make of Louise and Shipley's dynamic? Do you think they work well together? If you were a detective, who would you choose as your partner? Why?
4. At one point, Louise asks herself if everyone has the capacity for brutality within themselves. Weigh in on this. Do you think all humans are capable of evil? Are they born evil, or do they become evil?
5. When Louise and Shipley see Jon Durham's room with *Bone Keeper* drawn on the wall, Hazel says the story captured Jon's imagination. Do you think these kinds of myths are dangerous to children? Or are these campfire urban legends just another part of childhood?

6. Why do you think Louise runs from the fire in the woods? Describe her flashbacks. How does she deal with the trauma of her past? Do you think she will ever be able to move on from her traumatic childhood?
7. What do all the victims of the Bone Keeper have in common? Why do you think he chooses them as his prey?
8. Describe Caroline and her family. How were they wrapped up in this urban legend? Do you blame her for leaving her brother all those years ago?
9. What if you discovered someone close to you, a parent or a loved one, had done something terrible? How would you react?
10. What do you make of Steven Harris? Why does he confess to being the Bone Keeper? What do you think this says about the power of urban legends?
11. One of the things Louise struggles with the most is becoming like her father. Do you think our parents' character traits are passed down to us? Good and bad? What have you inherited from your parents?
12. Ultimately, do you think Louise is a good person? Why or why not?
13. What do you think happens to these characters after the story ends? Does the Bone Keeper somehow live on?