



# Sea of Tranquility

Emily St. John Mandel

A quietly luminous novel that drifts across centuries, following lives connected by a single strange moment in a forest. It is tender, contemplative, and surprisingly hopeful.

**Reading level:** Moderate

**Best for:** a club that loves atmospheric, character-driven fiction and slow, thoughtful conversation

## Discussion

### WARM-UP

1. Where did you do most of your reading of this one, and did the setting around you start to feel a little dreamy too?
2. Was there a moment early on where you settled in and thought, oh, I am going to love spending time in this book?

### DIGGING IN

1. The novel jumps between very different times and places. Which world did you find yourself most reluctant to leave, and what felt cozy about it to you?
2. Mandel writes a lot about small, ordinary comforts (a meal, a walk, a familiar face). Which little moment in the book stayed with you, and why?
3. The book sits with ideas of solitude and connection in a really gentle way. Did reading it make you feel more alone, or more connected to other people?
4. There is a quiet thread about art and writing as a way of holding onto life. Has a book, song, or piece of art ever comforted you the way these do for the characters?

### GOING DEEP

1. Without giving anything away, was there a passage that made you put the book down for a minute just to feel it? What was happening in you when that landed?
2. The novel gently asks what makes a life feel meaningful, even when the world is uncertain. What did it leave you carrying about your own life, in the softest sense?

## On the table

### ☞ **Creamy wild mushroom soup with crusty bread**

Earthy and forest-y, echoing the woods of Caiette and perfect for a hushed, snowy mood

### 🍲 **Roasted root vegetable pot pies**

Homey, warm, and a little nostalgic, like the small comforts the characters cling to across centuries

### ☞ **Brown butter shortbread with sea salt**

Buttery and quietly indulgent, a tiny sweet thing to nibble while talking about big questions

## To sip

### ☞ **Hot spiced apple cider with cinnamon (no alcohol)**

A cozy, non-alcoholic hug in a mug that suits the wintry, woodland feeling

### ☞ **Earl Grey tea with honey and milk (no alcohol)**

A bookish classic that fits the British Columbia mist and time-traveler reverie

### 🍷 **Mulled red wine with orange peel and clove**

Slow-sipping and warming, ideal for long, drifting conversation

## Run of show

**7:00**      **Soft landing**  
Slippers welcome. Pour cider and tea, let people settle in with shortbread before anything formal.

**7:20**      **Warm-up chat**  
Open with the two warmup questions while everyone gets a bowl of soup.

**7:45**      **Into the woods**  
Move to the theme questions. Keep it loose; let tangents happen.

**8:20**      **Trivia interlude**  
Run the printable trivia as a low-stakes group game between courses.

**8:40**      **The deeper drift**  
Bring out the deep questions with mulled wine and pot pies. Lower the lights a little.

**9:15**      **Soft close**  
Fill out scorecards together, share one-word reactions, send everyone home with a bookmark.

## HOST TIPS

- Use lots of small lamps and candles instead of overhead lights; this book wants twilight.
- Tell guests in advance that comfy clothes are encouraged, the whole point is to feel held.
- If conversation lulls, do not push; the silences fit the book. Offer more tea and a gentle next question.

## Playlist

*hushed, snowy, slightly otherworldly, like piano drifting through a forest at dusk*

01 Saman - Olafur Arnalds

03 On the Nature of Daylight - Max Richter

05 Re:Stacks - Bon Iver

07 Spiegel im Spiegel - Arvo Part

02 Avril 14th - Aphex Twin

04 Vladimir's Blues - Max Richter

06 Holocene - Bon Iver

08 Night Mail - Nils Frahm

# Trivia

1. Who wrote Sea of Tranquility? (Emily St. John Mandel)
2. In what year was the novel first published? (2022)
3. Sea of Tranquility shares characters and echoes with which earlier Mandel novel about a traveling Shakespeare troupe? (Station Eleven)
4. Sea of Tranquility also overlaps with which Mandel novel centered on a Ponzi scheme and a hotel? (The Glass Hotel)
5. The Sea of Tranquility is actually a real feature on what celestial body? (The Moon)
6. Emily St. John Mandel was born in what country? (Canada)
7. Part of the novel is set on Vancouver Island in what Canadian province? (British Columbia)
8. Before becoming a full-time writer, Mandel trained in what art form? (Contemporary dance)

## Rate the book

Coziness ☆☆☆☆☆

Atmosphere ☆☆☆☆☆

Emotional warmth ☆☆☆☆☆

Lingering thoughts ☆☆☆☆☆

Reread-ability ☆☆☆☆☆

One word for how this book felt: \_\_\_\_\_

A scene I want to live inside for an afternoon: \_\_\_\_\_

Something small from the book I want to carry into my week: \_\_\_\_\_

YOU'RE INVITED

## A quiet evening across time

Come read by lamplight with us. We are gathering for soup, shortbread, and a slow, cozy chat about Emily St. John Mandel's Sea of Tranquility.



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