

The God of the Woods

Liz Moore

A sweeping, atmospheric mystery set in the Adirondacks where a missing girl at a summer camp unearths decades of family secrets. Perfect for a slow, immersive read together.

Reading level: Moderate

Best for: Clubs who love slow-burn mysteries with deep characters and a strong sense of place

Discussion

WARM-UP

1. Did you ever go to summer camp or spend long stretches in the woods as a kid? What memory came rushing back while reading?
2. Where did you do most of your reading of this book, and did the setting of the story change how cozy (or uneasy) that spot felt?




DIGGING IN

1. Liz Moore makes the Adirondack woods feel almost like a character. What images or small sensory details stayed with you after you closed the book?
2. So much of this story is about how families hold onto, or hide, their grief. Was there a quiet moment between characters that moved you more than you expected?
3. The Van Laars and the people who work for them live in very different worlds. Which character's daily life felt most vivid or familiar to you?
4. Motherhood, in all its messy forms, runs through this book. Which mother's storyline tugged at you the most, and why do you think it landed that way?

GOING DEEP

1. Without giving anything away, was there a revelation or shift late in the book that made you want to flip back and reread earlier scenes with new eyes? How did that feel?
2. By the end, which character did you most want to wrap in a blanket and hand a warm drink to, and what do you hope life looks like for them after the last page?

On the table

-  **Slow-cooker beef and root vegetable stew**
Hearty lodge food that fits the chill of the Adirondack woods and a cozy night in
-  **Warm cornbread with honey butter**
Camp-kitchen comfort, easy to pull from the oven mid-discussion
-  **Skillet brownies with vanilla ice cream**
The grown-up version of a campfire treat, gooey and a little indulgent

To sip

-  **Hot spiced apple cider (no alcohol)**
Non-alcoholic and very Upstate New York autumn; serve in mugs everyone can wrap their hands around
-  **Bourbon hot toddy**
Honey, lemon, and bourbon for a quiet-evening-by-the-fire feel
-  **Maple bourbon old fashioned**
A nod to the woody setting and the Van Laars' polished world

Run of show

- 7:00** **Arrive and warm up**
Greet guests with mugs of cider and let everyone settle into soft seating before any book talk
- 7:15** **Stew and small talk**
Serve stew and cornbread family-style and ease into the two warm-up questions
- 7:45** **Into the woods**
Move into the theme questions while people go back for seconds; keep it conversational, no need to hit every one
- 8:20** **Dessert and deep dives**
Bring out the skillet brownies and shift to the deeper questions in a softer, slower tone
- 8:50** **Trivia and scorecards**
Pass out trivia cards and scorecards as a light wind-down activity
- 9:15** **Next book and goodbyes**
Send everyone home with a bookmark and leftovers if you have them

HOST TIPS

- Lean into low lighting: lamps, candles, and string lights do more work than any decor
- Pre-portion the stew into mugs or shallow bowls so people can eat one-handed while talking
- Keep a soft blanket or two draped over chairs; it sets the tone immediately

Playlist

Hushed folk and gentle Americana, like pine needles and woodsmoke in audio form

- 01 Holocene - Bon Iver
- 02 The Night We Met - Lord Huron
- 03 Re: Stacks - Bon Iver
- 04 River - Joni Mitchell
- 05 Wildwood - Paul Weller
- 06 Sister - Angus & Julia Stone
- 07 Pink Moon - Nick Drake
- 08 Helplessness Blues - Fleet Foxes

Trivia

1. In which mountain region of New York is The God of the Woods set? (The Adirondacks)
2. Who is the author of The God of the Woods? (Liz Moore)
3. In what year was The God of the Woods published? (2024)
4. Name another widely read novel by Liz Moore that also explores family and loss. (Long Bright River)
5. What kind of institution is the central setting where a child goes missing? (A summer camp)
6. The novel unfolds across multiple what, jumping between different eras? (Timelines (or decades))
7. Liz Moore is also known for teaching creative writing at which Philadelphia university? (Temple University)
8. The story centers on a wealthy family whose surname is what? (Van Laar)

Rate the book

Coziness of the read ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Atmosphere and setting ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Characters you grew attached to ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Emotional pull ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Pages-per-cup-of-tea pace ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

One word for how this book made you feel: _____

The scene I would most like to step inside (with a blanket): _____

A character I am still thinking about: _____

YOU'RE INVITED

Into the Woods, Into the Cozy

Bring your slippers and your theories. We are gathering for stew, warm drinks, and a long, gentle talk about The God of the Woods.



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