

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Lagging Indicators – Jennifer Anglade Dahlberg

1. Mia Lewis describes the world of Wall Street as defined by the boys' club where women inevitably reach the "glass ceiling" or fall off the "glass cliff." Chauvinism and greed are prevalent. Women are expected to conform to male-defined expectations. Are you shocked or intrigued by the Wall Street environment Mia inhabits? Do you think it is an industry women should pursue? Or are the cards stacked against them?
2. When her male colleagues betray her, Mia loses her armor of self-control. Do you agree with her reaction? If not, how could she have handled it differently? Was she wrong to let her personal opinion and emotions show? Do you believe that the firm's reaction was justified? Finally, what do you think of Wall Street's response to Mia's fall from grace?
3. Mia is successful at work but unlucky at love. Why do you think it is so difficult to attain both professional and personal fulfillment?
4. Secrets are an overarching theme in the novel. Do you think Mia had reason to be so evasive about her past? Do you think her evasions crossed the line into outright lies?
5. Was it difficult to follow the financial details in the novel?
6. How do you think the issue of race was handled? Do you think Mia's race or gender were the most determining factors in her career path and eventual disillusionment?
7. Mia loses both her father and mother by the time she is twenty-one years old. How do you think those losses affected her life decisions?
8. Is Mia's relentless sense of independence an asset or a liability? What are her strengths? Her weaknesses?
9. Describe the relationship Mia has with Oliver Bishop. What attracted her to him?
10. Can motherhood and work exist harmoniously?
11. How does Mia change throughout the novel? Are they positive or negative changes?
12. Analyze Mia's relationship with her boss, Peter Branco. How does it change as the novel progresses?
13. Do you think Mia duped Liz Jansing?
14. Do you think the public scrutiny Mia endured was fair? Was it colored by sexism and/or racism?
15. Describe Mia's portrait of New York City. Is the city too intricately tied to her identity? Does she exist in a rarefied bubble and lost all sense of perspective?
16. Mia retreats to Overlook to escape the financial, personal, and professional turmoil in her life and, in doing so, detaches from her old persona and responsibilities. What did you think of this? Was Mia being cowardly by isolating herself instead of selling off her apartment and looking for a new job? Or was this period in Mia's life necessary and inevitable? Finally, discuss the outcome of the move. What lessons does she gain from living in Overlook? Do you think Mia will sustain this growth of character when she reenters the real world?
17. Mia states she is terrified of becoming a "failure." What do you think defines a "successful" life?
18. The dust jacket for *Lagging Indicators* is pink, superimposed with stock market ticker tape. What do you think the color pink symbolizes? Do you think the color and graphics are an effective juxtaposition?
19. Does *Lagging Indicators* have a happy ending? Were you surprised by the ending of the novel—did you see it coming? What new directions and challenges face Mia? How do you think the next chapter of her life will play out?
20. If the book were made into a movie, who would play each of the lead characters?