

The Woman in the Library Discussion Questions

1. When Freddie, Whit, Cain, and Marigold get coffee together for the first time, Freddie mentions that it was the start of her friendship with a killer. Who did you suspect in that moment?
2. Thanks to the emails, we are regularly reminded that Freddie's story is fiction. Did that change your experience of the mystery at all?
3. Freddie, Whit, Marigold, and Cain become intimate friends very quickly. Have you ever made friends in a similar way? What circumstances (besides manufactured peril) led to these types of sudden, intense friendships?
4. Marigold insists to the others, "A scream is supposed to bring help, and we heard her scream." Do you think of yourself as being responsible for strangers? How effective is bystander intervention?
5. Describe the role of Freddie's neighbor Leo. How does he change Freddie's perspective?
6. Do you think the other characters took Marigold's stalking behavior seriously? What would you do if your friend was acting like Marigold?
7. Freddie questions herself for trusting Cain several times but never really changes her mind. Where do you think her loyalty comes from?
8. In his emails, Leo insists that Hannah specify the races of her characters, pointing out that it could drastically change their experiences and perspectives in a story set in America. What does a story gain by making race explicit? What are the potential drawbacks?
9. Caroline and Whit planned to test whether they could goad Cain back into a life of crime. If they had executed their plan as they originally intended, what do you think would have happened? What does their experiment reflect about our attitudes toward convicted criminals?