

READING GROUP NOTES

IN A COMMON HOUR
SITA WALKER

Sometimes the most important lessons are learnt at lunchtime.

With a cast of unforgettable characters, In a Common Hour is a smart, funny and wise novel that shows us all the ways we are connected.

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In 1851, Henry David Thoreau journalled: 'The question is not what you look at, but what you see.' Which character in the novel most exemplifies this quote?

The novel has themes of spirituality meeting science. In your opinion, is there any overlap between science and religion?

If this novel was adapted for film, who would play the lead roles?

How do the adolescent experiences in this novel differ from your own? Has your opinion of contemporary teenagers changed after reading?

Birds are a key motif in the novel. What is the significance of the black kite/firehawk?

If you could have an hour lunch with one of the characters from the novel, who would you choose and why?

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WISE. WITTY. INTERWOVEN.

In what ways does the forest setting act almost like a character in the novel?

The Sufi poet and mystic Rumi writes: 'You are not a drop in the ocean, you are the entire ocean in a drop.' How does the novel express this idea, stylistically and thematically?

Which scene had the strongest emotional impact on you, and why?

'The heart of the world' is mentioned several times in the novel, particularly in relation to the gifts of Solomon Tapu. What do you think is meant by this phrase?