

# ESCAPING THE WHALE

## *Suggested Book Club Discussion Questions*

1. What is your first impression of Marcia?
2. Could you tell that she holds all that inherited trauma?
3. How does she seem to feel about her job and her work environment?
4. How would you characterize her relationship with Jason?
5. Why does she stay with him?
6. Marcia has a younger sister and an older brother. In what way are those two foils?
7. Is Marcia's relationship with them helpful or hurtful to her? Discuss one at a time.
8. How does Marcia feel when interacting with her parents? Why?
9. What do you consider the turning point of the book? Why?
10. Do we see Marcia in a new light at any part of the book? What made you change your perspective about her?
11. What is your overall assessment of her? How do you feel about her? Would you want to be friends with her?
12. Why does Marcia take off for Mexico?
13. Why does she go off with the German guy?
14. Two of her "symptoms" – the Closet Thing and the Eye Thing – represent inner struggles Marcia faces. What do you think they represent about her?
15. A number of teenage issues are addressed in the novel – teen pregnancy, teen suicide, and cutting (self-mutilation) among them. What are we made aware of? How do these issues relate to Marcia herself?
16. The Iranian hostage crisis of 1979-1980 plays a role in Marcia's life. Why does it have such a strong impact, on her and on the story?
17. The ocean and marine life have a background role in the book. Where does that come up? How do you think it connects to Marcia?
18. What do you think the title means?
19. What did you take away from the novel? Was there any lesson or message you feel it imparted?
20. Did the decision Marcia makes at the end surprise you? Did you envision a different ending?

