1. In the introduction to the *The Widows*, a hawk's hunt and the Widowmaker collapse are juxtaposed. Both the mine's collapse and the image of a hawk go on to play significant and symbolic roles in the story. Why do you think the author chose to start by tying these events together? What is the connection between the two?

2. In Chapter 7, Lily notes that the men who have offered her the role of sheriff have underestimated her. In what ways do you think her actions exemplify this observation? How does this statement relate to Marvena, too—could you say that she, too, is underestimated?

3. Setting plays an important role in this story. How might the story be different without the mountains and forests as its backdrop?

4. The titular "Widows"—Marvena and Lily—each lend a unique point of view to this novel. What draws these two women together? What keeps them apart? Which woman did you relate to more?

5. Flashbacks from both women are prominent in The Widows. What role do they play in expanding our understanding of the women? Of the mystery at hand?

6. Marvena and Lily each have a support group, but of very different kinds. How have the people around them made them the women they are?

7. When Lily is preparing to enter the mine in Chapter 26, Martins tries to stop her, insinuating that it's bad luck for a woman to enter a mine. Lily returns with, "I think we're past worrying about bad luck." How does the idea of luck, or fate, thread through this novel? How does it feed into the relationships between the various men and women characters? How have those roles changed by the end?

8. Daniel's past—and a number of his present-day secrets—are uncovered throughout the novel. Did your view of him change by the final pages?

9. This novel pits two strong women (Marvena and Lily) against two powerful men (George Vogel and Luther Ross). Would you say the men are reflections of the women, or their opposites?

10. As shown in the Author's Note, both Marvena and Lily have their basis in real, historical women. Does that knowledge deepen or change your understanding of the novel in any way? If so, how?