On the first pages of the book, the Handmaid talks about the insatiability of teenagers who used to use the gym at the Learning Centre. Later she asks: “I am not being wasted. Why do I want?”

Do you think the same people change so much that they can go from being insatiable to not wanting anything?

Do you think that it’s better to always want more, or to never want anything? Or do you think that the best is somewhere in between? Why?

Cora believes that what the handmaids are doing, “they’re doing it for us all.” Do you think she’s right? How do you know when someone is doing something for others?

How do you think Cora’s comments about the handmaid’s duties relate to whether or not they will eventually be allowed to use the front door?

What do you think has to be true for Aunt Lydia to be right that people see the handmaids’ position as one of honour?

Why does Aunt Lydia tell the handmaids that their presence in the house isn’t an easy one for wives to put up with if their position is one of honour?

What do you think Aunt Lydia’s suggestion that handmaids put themselves in the wives’ shoes, and the statement by the Commander’s Wife that her husband is her husband, and that’s “one of the things we fought for” reveal about the handmaids’ position in Gilead?

What do you imagine an Eye is?

What does The Handmaid mean that if one of the pair of handmaids goes missing the other will be accountable?

What do you think The Handmaid means when she says Ofglen may be “a real believer, a Handmaid in more than name”?

Would a “real believer” need a spy? Why are they still issued one?