

Fresh Water for Flowers: Discussion Questions

- 1. One critic called *Fresh Water for Flowers* “A tender and poignant exploration of love, loss, and redemption.” *How do these themes weave together in the narrative? Given the multiple characters and storylines, how do such feelings transcend the characters’ stories in the novel and reflect back on to the readers?*
- 2. The novel recounts Violette’s life over the course of many years, but not always in order. *How does this inter-changing chronological structure add to the narrative? Does it take away from it? How does it further underscore the novel’s theme of life’s unpredictability and Violette’s (and, ultimately, ours) resilience?*
- 3. Each chapter begins with an epitaph as a preamble for what’s to come. *Do you find these epitaphs informed the contents of each chapter? What role do the epitaph’s play in the story?*
- 4. Chapter 75 ends with Violette wondering of Julien, “How will our encounters end?” (346). Meanwhile, Chapter 76 begins with the epitaph “The family isn’t destroyed, it changes. A part of it merely becomes invisible” (347). *How do Violette’s encounters with the prominent people in her life— Phillipe, Leonine, Sasha, Celia, Julien, Irene, etc.—guide her to the end of the novel? How does her family change over the course of the novel? Is a family merely one made up of a bloodline?*
- 5. After Leonine’s death, both Philippe and Violette grieve in their own ways, all the way having to deal with the scrutiny from friends and family around them. *Discuss how this novel the different ways this novel portrays grief and the avenues with which each character takes to heal. Does any character grieve in a similar way as you? If so, what did you learn from it?*
- 6. This novel portrays different kinds of love: the love friends share; your first love; the love between a mother and a daughter, and between a father and a son; the complicated loves; the loves lost; the misunderstood loves, and more. *Do you find love to be enough of a driving force for redemption with some of these characters? Do you believe Violette to be incapable or unworthy of love, as she continuously claims?*
- 7. One critic calls *Fresh Water for Flowers* “a triumphant celebration of life and love.” *Discuss the ways in which this novel reproduces the cycle of life and the ways in which it celebrates it, with all the good and the bad that come along with living? Did you learn anything along the way?*

Source of questions: [Ericarobbin.com/fresh water for flowers by Valeria Perrin](http://Ericarobbin.com/fresh-water-for-flowers-by-Valeria-Perrin)