

Suggested Questions for Book Club Discussions

THE PEOPLE OF OSTRICH MOUNTAIN

What did you learn about the culture or history of Kenya that was new, surprising or memorable?

The mountain is of significant importance to the story. At one point, we learn that the country, Kenya, got its name from the mountain and not the other way around. Discuss ways in which the author portrays the significance of the mountain in the lives of the people around it.

Who are “The People of Ostrich Mountain”? As the story’s boundaries expand beyond the tribes living around Mt. Kenya, does the definition of who belongs to this group evolve?

Names are a fundamental part of one’s identity. Discuss how the practice of naming changed with the arrival of the British and how Wambũi’s rejection of the name Lydia became one of the defining moments of her life. How did her marriage to Mwangi influence her when the time came for them to name their children?

Do you think Wambũi made the right decision to forgo an advanced education in math to help her husband and family? Why or why not?

Discuss the relationship between Wambũi and Ms. Atwood. How did it evolve throughout the book?

A major theme of the book is the interconnectedness of cultures and families. Discuss some of the scenes where this theme was most evident.

Another major theme of the book is the immigrant experience of both Ray and Ms. Atwood. How were these experiences similar? How were they different?

In this book, most of the focus of Ray’s immigrant experience remains on his country of origin. How does this perspective compare with other immigrant narratives which center mainly on the individual’s life in their country of adoption?

If anyone in the discussion group was not born in the US and came to America as a teen or adult, ask them to share their experience and if they could identify with what Ray or Ms. Atwood were going through.

Many authors would never attempt a multi-generational family saga taking place across three continents for their first book. Do you think Ndirangu Githaiga succeeded in this ambitious vision for the novel? Why or why not?

What do you think the future holds for Wambui? For Ray?

What character did you most identify with and why?

What did you like most about the book?

The author has said that he wants a takeaway from his books to be that “People are more alike than they are different.” Do you think this is an apt takeaway from *The People of Ostrich Mountain*? Why or why not?

The image shows a handwritten signature in black ink. The signature is written in a cursive, lowercase style and reads "ndirangu". There is a long, sweeping underline that extends from the end of the name back towards the beginning.