



Wildlife Book Club

Prodigal Summer by Barbara Kingsolver

Monday, August 1, 2016



Amanda Nicholson, WCV:

Hi, all! Who's ready for book club!

Comment From BarbG

ready and waiting

Comment From Sharon in Fl

I am.



Raina Krasner, WCV:

Hiiii!

Comment From Peggy from Pungo(VABeach)

I am!

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

I'm here!

Comment From Mary E in NC

Ready to go!

Comment From TerryMI

Ready for book club



Amanda Nicholson, WCV:

Yay!

Comment From Lacy, WCV

Ready!



Amanda Nicholson, WCV:

Lacy!

Comment From Shirley - Greensboro, NC

Ready in Greensboro!

Comment From CK in Pa

I am!

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

GN is lurking



Amanda Nicholson, WCV:

Just as a reminder -- we'll categorize some "themes" as comments come through and will attempt to keep them together. So if your comment isn't posted right away, we will likely get to that when we get to that "theme"!

Comment From Peggy from Pungo(VABeach)

Loved it. One of Barbara Kingsolver's best.

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

Loved the intertwining of family with nature!

Comment From BarbG

first time with this author so took a few chapters to figure it out

Comment From Lydia PA ☽☼☽?

GN will not like this discussion centered so much on alpha females.

Comment From Mardie in Seattle

She covered a LOT of bases in one engaging book!

Comment From Mary E in NC

Loved the way the author interwove the stories of the people and the nature around them - lots of information on wildlife!

Comment From 33mama

Whew! Just made it! Hi everyone!

Comment From Becky in SoCal

I really enjoyed it. Much different than I expected.

Comment From Shirley - Greensboro, NC

I wanted the stories to continue!

Comment From Lydia PA ☽☼☽?

I love Barbra Kinsolver's books-ALL of them

Comment From Brenda from Virginia

The author's biology degree really showed through the entire book, and I loved it.



Raina Krasner, WCV:

Yes, it was so interesting to read a fiction book that felt kind of non-fiction-y.

Comment From BarbG

Lots of great information in that book

Comment From Lydia PA ☽☼☽?

I read this was many years ago--had to refresh--of course, you can guess who got me reading kingsolver



Amanda Nicholson, WCV:

Oh, I looked up a book club type question to kick us off: Why do you think this book is entitled Prodigal Summer? In what ways do all of the characters display "prodigal" characteristics?



Raina Krasner, WCV:
Oh, good question ...

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy
starting off with a hard question!

Comment From Lacy, WCV

Because there was so much talk about prodigy :) and during the summer :)



Raina Krasner, WCV:
I like Lacy's explanation.

Comment From Brenda from Virginia
Great answer, Lacy!

Comment From BarbG

Lacy has it

Comment From Mary E in NC

Mating was rampant in this "prodigal summer"!

Comment From Sharon in Fl

Love, courtship, and family.



Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
Lots of extravagance of nature!

Comment From Shirley - Greensboro, NC

Prodigal can also mean wasteful. I think the author is trying to teach us not to be wasteful.

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

Prodigy moths, prodigy people, prodigy trees, prodigy grasses...

Comment From Lydia PA ☺☹☺?

well in the sense of the prodigal son, the main characters and the coyotes had left their place of origin to do something others may disapprove of

Comment From Brenda from Virginia

So many gifts are nature are involved in the narrative, and the characters all have gifts to share with others as well.

Comment From Peggy from Pungo(VABeach)

The word can also mean bounteous. Each character received a gift of learning and growth during the course of the summer.

Comment From Lydia PA ☺☹☺?

then there is a sense of the prodigal lushness definition--the forest, the mating, the pheromones...etc

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

I kept thinking in terms of lavish reproduction!



Raina Krasner, WCV:
I think that all makes perfect sense!

Comment From Mardie in Seattle

That's what I was thinking, Lyd. They left their roots to do what their families didn't approve of. On the pther hand, they were coming back in the end.



Raina Krasner, WCV:

Oh, true. So maybe there's a theme of disapproval?

Comment From Brenda from Virginia

I agree that Kingsolver is using more than one definition of prodigal. Most of the characters have strayed from others in one manner or another.

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

I hadn't even thought of "gifts" or "returning". Oh, lots of disapproval in this book!

Comment From Lacy, WCV

I think the theme of disapproval or "going against the norm" was definitely a theme for all the story lines.

Comment From Kathy in NM ♥

Prodigal can also mean someone who has stepped outside the family to do what they may disapprove of - these characters are perfect examples of this in many ways.

Comment From Lydia PA ☺☺☺?

Or going WITH their instincts Lacy

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

And as we learned late in the book, the other members of the family had stepped out as well, much to Lusa's surprise.

Comment From Mary E in NC

But lots of reconciliation in the end!

Comment From Lydia PA ☺☺☺?

I loved that story the about members was set in a community in Appalachia, specifically focusing on the lives of Deanna Wolfe, Lusa Landowski, and Garnett Walker. These main characters are introverted and solitary individuals with strong views about their natural surroundings. They are a part of a complex web that connects all living beings.

Comment From Mary E in NC

I think it showed the interconnectedness of all creatures, including the human ones!



Raina Krasner, WCV:

Yes! I loved how all the different story lines tied together.

Comment From Brenda from Virginia

That tying together was masterful.



Amanda Nicholson, WCV:

Yes, I like the books where different characteristics are weaved together.

Comment From Ramona

Yes Lydia, It seemed as though they were all really being true to themselves although it may not appear that way at first glance.



Amanda Nicholson, WCV:

Ramona!!



Raina Krasner, WCV:

Hi!

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

I started getting lost as to who was related to whom...

Comment From Lydia PA 🙌🏻?

Hi Ramona!!! So happy you are here ♥

Comment From Lydia PA 🙌🏻?

LOL JS Amy--they were all interconnected or related in some way

Comment From Shirley - Greensboro, NC

I'm with you Jersey Shore Amy. I sometimes make a list of characters so I can make notes.

Comment From TerryMI

Pretty avatar Amanda

Comment From Brenda from Virginia

Love your luna moth, AA. Does that mean you identify the most with Lusa?

**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**

I think I enjoyed her storyline the most. Watching her journey through a difficult situation, and connecting with her new family and new life.

**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**

What storyline resonated the most with you all?

Comment From Mary E in NC

I think the part about Garnett and Nannie was hilarious - loved how they finally reconciled at the end!

**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**

Yes, they were quite the pair. :) I enjoyed them as well.

Comment From BarbG

I liked Lusa best-her story and how she tried to stay true to herself but still have family

Comment From Becky in SoCal

I loved Garnett Walker. He reminded me of an elderly neighbor when I was a kid.

Comment From Ramona

You all have to give me a minute to catch up. Loved the book!

Comment From Brenda from Virginia

I admired Lusa the most but loved Nannie the most. She and Garnett's dealings were fun.

Comment From Shirley - Greensboro, NC

I saw my dad in Garnett - set in his ways and suffering from vertigo.

Comment From Peggy from Pungo(VABeach)

I enjoyed them all, but I think I related most to Nannie and Garnett. /the reminded me of some of my relatives. My grandmpther used to tell us the story of the snapping turtle. Scared us so much we didn't go near them.

Comment From Mardie in Seattle

As much as I would like to have lived remotely in the woods, I admire Lusa's ability to find the good in what she's given. Also maybe I'm more into Nannie's ability to live as she believes. Yes!

Comment From Mary E in NC

I really enjoyed Lusa getting to know her family - and realizing they weren't all against her!



Amanda Nicholson, WCV:

Yes! I think that was a theme of the book too -- we all can be in our own worlds too much sometimes, and lose sight of "the other side" of the story.

Comment From CK in Pa

I liked Nannie the most.

Comment From Brenda from Virginia

I've known people like Garnett--crusty on the outside but always thinking and frequently coming around in the face of logic. His snapper incident was so funny that I kept going back to reread it.

Comment From Peggy from Pungo(VABeach)

Shirley, I've had the same vertigo. Went to PT and fixed it up just like Nannie did.

Comment From Ramona

Deanna. I know that I admire moths a lot more now.

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

I admired Deanna the most, but enjoyed the Lusa and Jewell stories the most.

Comment From Lydia PA ☽☼☽?

Deanna's did with me..I have had parts of life in common with her in some ways. But the coyotes story really is one I love. And too early to talk about yet but I loved the circle that came with the very last chapter--as told from the coyote alpha female



Raina Krasner, WCV:

Oh and actually, Amanda, that's one of my favorite quotes from the book. The author mentions how to the chickadee, he is the center of the world - I think that's true of a lot of people.

Comment From Kathy in NM ♥

I loved that too, Raina. Everyone and everything was interconnected. I loved that many of the nature lessons showed that interconnection and how man's intervention can sadly alter nature's balance.

Comment From Lydia PA ☽☼☽?

They eventually learned they were not solitary at all

Comment From Mary E in NC

I think the part about Garnett and Nannie was hilarious - loved how they finally reconciled at the end!

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

Every now and then I was wondering what Lusa was giving up by staying on the farm and not returning to her home town. Almost stubborn - didn't want family to think it was getting its way and making her leave.

Comment From 33mama

I liked Lusa figuring out how to help the kids.

Comment From Sharon in Fl

I enjoyed watching as Garrett went from a gruff older man to a tender and

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

I kept worrying about Garnett falling on his stairs!

Comment From Becky in SoCal

I loved it when Garnett finally told Nanny about the roof tiles he had and gave them to her. I always knew he had a sweet heart.

Comment From Peggy from Pungo(VABeach)

Admired how Luse sought out a new source of income when her brother-in-laws conspired to not help her on the farm. Learned a lot about goat raising. Not for me. LOL

Comment From Mardie in Seattle

For all the distances they'd created, there was a lot of love there.

Comment From Lacy

I liked when she explained the monarchs eating milkweed and the luna moths.

Comment From Kathy in NM ♥

I loved that something as simple as a moth was a major part of Lusa's world. I've been noticing moths with more appreciation!

Comment From Lacy

Yes... And, like the coyotes, Lusa's new family had a strong female presence in the leadership. Lusa was finding her place in a family of strong women! That had to be intimidating but they ended up respecting her for it.

**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**

Lots of coyote comments -- let's talk about Deanna's storyline!

**Raina Krasner, WCV:**

Ohhh Lacy. So deep.

Comment From Brenda from Virginia

The coyotes seem to symbolize the part of nature that is magnificent but is vulnerable and needs consideration from humans to survive.

Comment From BarbG

I enjoyed Deanna talking about coyotes-the more they were killed, the higher the numbers of animals-family was important in this

Comment From Mary E in NC

I thought it was really interesting about how killing predators makes them multiply faster - I saw a program on "coy-dogs" that are being found in cities now!

Comment From Lydia PA ☽☼☽?

I hated the story in the beginning of the farmer shooting every coyote in the den near the farm..that was part of Deanna's story.They were protecting their farms Then they were apparently for for a long time.

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

And the coyotes will do whatever it takes to care for their kits, even if it means moving.

Comment From Lydia PA ☽☼☽?

Yes Raina, I agree. In coyotes, only the alpha bear young, the other adults in the pack forgo reproduction. They protect and support the den, gather food, play with the pups, train them to forage and hunt, etc But they need each other. That is finally what Deanna learned

Comment From Mary E in NC

Deanna was all about protecting the coyotes, all the animals and bugs and the environment, and gave lots of good information on them. She finally realized that she couldn't do it alone.

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

Trying to convince hunters not to kill predators is a very hard argument. To see the big picture beyond their immediate losses.

Comment From Lydia PA 🇵🇦🇦🇵?

I liked Deanna's lessons learned from Eddie Bondo, a hunter/sheep farmer from Wyoming. Although there is a strong attraction between these two, their beliefs about protecting species, predators in particular, are vastly different. . Their story ends with him leaving her as well as the coyotes alone; in a note he says he has met his match. She will never forget him, for she has her memories of his touch as well as the child she is carrying. In her final days on the mountain, she realizes how faulty the belief in solitude is, because all creatures are connected; she is headed back to civilization to live with her father's former girlfriend, Nannie Rawlings, to raise her child.



Amanda Nicholson, WCV:

One of the other reasons why this book was so interesting to me was because it was about "home" -- it takes place in Virginia, so the part about the coyotes often being painted as "villains" certainly rings true. They are considered a "nuisance" species here in VA, and often there are bounties placed on them.



Amanda Nicholson, WCV:

The interesting thing is that many scientists have noted that shooting them only makes them reproduce more -- the females compensate by having larger litters.



Amanda Nicholson, WCV:

VDGIF did a study on coyotes -- analyzing their scat (which Deanna does in the book!): <https://blog.wildlife.virgi...>



Amanda Nicholson, WCV:

"In areas where available territories are limited, coyote numbers appear to be regulated more effectively by competition with one another rather than by mortality from hunting and trapping."



Amanda Nicholson, WCV:

"Coyotes make convenient scapegoats, but they are just one species in a multi-predator system that also includes bobcats and bears"

Comment From Kathy in NM ♥

Since we live in their historic range, I was most interested in the coyote story line. We have a very active coyote pack where we now live, and everyone near here has a "coyote" tale. In NM, you definitely have to learn to live with them and how to protect your animals.

Comment From Lydia PA 🇵🇦🇦🇵?

a I thught it was funny when Deanna examined the scat when she was tracking the coyote only to find it has seeds from her rock that she put out for the birds. Coyote had been watching Deanna

Comment From Mardie in Seattle

I thought that was really interesting. didn't know that many had discovered that they will reproduce more. I have seen documentaries on how the land recovers when wolves are allowed to flourish, and kept expecting her to bring in that.

Comment From Lacy

This book made me miss my roots in southwest Virginia. The imagery and her descriptions were magical!

Comment From Brenda from Virginia

How did you determine the setting of the book, Amanda? I know it was in Appalachia, but I thought it was in Kentucky.



Amanda Nicholson, WCV:

Hmm, I'm trying to go through my notes. At first, I figured Kentucky or VA (Barbara was born in Kentucky but lives in VA now -- southwest). She makes references to Lexington (which could be KY or VA) but also references someone being from Grundy (VA) ... hmm. Something threw me in the VA direction and now I'm not finding it ...

Comment From Peggy from Pungo(VABeach)

Roanoke was mentioned too, so it made me thing the book was set in VA.

Comment From BarbG

talked a lot about Roanoke too

Comment From Mary E in NC

She mentioned Roanoke several times - that's in Va.

Comment From Lydia PA 🐶🐶?

The book says it was set (this story) in southern Appalachia in VA

**Raina Krasner, WCV:**

I don't think it explicitly says VA.

**Raina Krasner, WCV:**

Although Barbara Kingsolver lives in VA.

Comment From Lacy

I think the bulk of it takes place in Kentucky, but they talk about areas in Virginia a lot. So I figured it was right on the border.

Comment From Brenda from Virginia

I wanted to put the story in VA myself, but at one point Deanna mentions going "down into Virginia." I decided it is in KY. I cheated and Googled the setting, but no one said anything other than Appalachia.

**Raina Krasner, WCV:**

I kind of like not knowing exactly. It's like ... representative of a lot of small towns in SW VA or Kentucky ... or even West VA.

**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**

You can be in KY and go south into VA. :)

Comment From Lacy

In southwest Virginia, going to Roanoke was considered going to the big city! I'm sure that was the same for the surrounding areas in West Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee and Kentucky.

Comment From Ramona

This discussion brings up another interesting theme. The boundaries between states are man made.

**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**

Oooh, good point!

**Raina Krasner, WCV:**

Ohhh so true. And wildlife doesn't understand boundaries either!

Comment From Lydia PA 🐶🐶?

Right Raomona..there are lots of boundaries issues in this book

Comment From Brenda from Virginia

Like fences, nature doesn't recognize man's boundaries either

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

Deanna is very careful to protect her personal boundaries.

**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**

Ooooh ...



Raina Krasner, WCV:
So. Many. Metaphors.

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

To the extent that I felt sorry for her!

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

Deanna seemed invulnerable to the outside world, but fell vulnerable to Eddie!

Comment From Brenda from Virginia

Deanna is a strong woman who can blend in with nature but is hiding from dealing with humans because she has been hurt.

Comment From Lacy

I liked that about Deanna. She didn't want to give too much away because she was afraid of getting hurt. TImid. Like a coyote.

Comment From BarbG

I felt Deanna was very vulnerable as she had been hurt

Comment From GN

I seem to be a tad bit late. Having a problem remembering which time zone I currently am in.



Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
Oh, GN ...

Comment From Ramona

That's right Jersey Shore Amy. Deanna thinks she has kept her boundaries. Mr. Bondo trespassed very early on.

Comment From Mardie in Seattle

I've examines coyote scat and see lots of seeds. I don't know how to id the seeds though!

Comment From Lacy

Raina and Alex and I had a little conversation about that today... it is unfortunate that people have this attitude against coyotes... but coyotes are wiley even in their reproduction.

Comment From Becky in SoCal

I live in SoCal, large population area, and we still have coyotes in our yard. Many cities in our county and also placing bounty on them. Very sad. We have invaded their area.

Comment From Lydia PA 🇺🇸🇨🇦?

Right Raina, and not only warnings against hunting predators who compensate by breeding faster, or against pesticides that boost pest populations by killing off the bugs that prey on them. The ecosystem reestablishing itself in the protected forest is seen as a common habitat, not a wilderness to be kept at bay from the farmland. I love what Deanna says of hunting coyote: "It's not just one death. It's a piece of the world turned upside down."

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

I had never read that before - about numbers of predatory animals increasing when they are being hunted.



Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
Yes, I think she did a great job of delivering ecological lessons in a really palatable way.

Comment From Lacy

Some of the book felt non-fiction because she was stuffing so many facts into a fictional story line. I liked that!

Comment From Lydia PA 🇺🇸🇨🇦?

She did. These kinds of novels with truth about ecology and animal life, etc are my favorite way to learn

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

Learned so much, and felt effortless! :)

Comment From Brenda from Virginia

Kingsolver is definitely a good teacher.

Comment From BarbG

Deanna's reason for leaving the snake alone was great



Amanda Nicholson, WCV:

Yes!!

Comment From Peggy from Pungo(VABeach)

Much like the coyotes she loves, Deanna has chosen to isolate herself from people. Eddie Bondo intrudes on her plan to be solitary.

Comment From Lydia PA ☺☹☺?

See! That is why I relate to Deanna. I was like that emotionally too at one point in my life after being hurt. Put up a wall. But was a strong woman and accomplished a lot

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

When Deanna was furious about the snake eating the baby birds I knew she was pregnant!



Amanda Nicholson, WCV:

Ha!



Amanda Nicholson, WCV:

Emotions were definitely in control there!

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

Those mothering hormones kicking in.

Comment From Shirley - Greensboro, NC

I thought about how Ed who testifies to the cost of bald eagles. Deanna used the same idea when telling Eddie that the life of a top carnivore is the most expensive item in the pyramid.

Comment From BarbG

her falling asleep during the day made me think she was pregnant

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

You're right Shirley, and now I'm always thinking "who is eating who" out there...

Comment From Lydia PA ☺☹☺?

It was the pregnancy and instinct to protect and nurture her unborn child that pushes Deanna out of her solitary life. She knew she needed others help. Just like the coyotes



Amanda Nicholson, WCV:

Let's move on to Garnett's storyline ...

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

The part about Garnett and the bob-whites disappearing because the native grasses were gone - that made me think back to Sand County Almanac - think it was in there too?



Amanda Nicholson, WCV:

That sounds familiar.



Amanda Nicholson, WCV:

(and I love how book club books always remind me of other book club books!)

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

And made me think of the native grasses planted in Bear Yard #1. :)



Amanda Nicholson, WCV:

Raina learned about chestnuts at Riverfest.



Raina Krasner, WCV:

At Riverfest, I met a couple of people who volunteer with the American Chestnut Foundation. One woman explained the propagation process to me, and it sounded so much like Kingsolver's description! The crossing of Chinese Chestnuts with American chestnuts to make them resistant to disease. I also learned that the tree roots aren't necessarily affected by the devastating fungus, so new shoots can sprout up from root systems of trees that were killed off above ground. Anyway ... so cool! There are propagation farms in a few places around central VA.

Comment From BarbG

I didn't know much about chestnuts but it got me reading about them and what he was doing

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

Made me wonder where else Chestnuts are being propagated. And sad that no one thought of leaving the surviving trees alone.

Comment From Peggy from Pungo(VABeach)

Garnett's determination to revive the chestnut tree was truly a labor of love.

Comment From Brenda from Virginia

Kingsolver sets him apart from the other two characters from the start. His first chapter is very brief and tells very little about him, unlike the first chapters for Deanna and Lusa.



Amanda Nicholson, WCV:

Hmm, interesting!

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

Yes - took a while to learn more about Garnett. He reminded me of another self-proclaimed curmudgeon that I worked with years ago.

Comment From Ramona

And they say that growth is painful. A nut has a shell that needs to crack.

Comment From Sharon in Fl

One of the things I noticed was that all of the characters had experienced painful losses. They had in many ways died inside and the story chronicles their return to life and caring for one another.

Comment From Lydia PA ☺☹☺?

Good point Ramona. But Nannie helped crack Garnett's shell

Comment From CK in Pa

There's an American Chestnut at north lookout on Hawk Mnt. After reading Garnett's story I hope to go see if ti still blooms in spring.

Comment From Brenda from Virginia

I loved all the factual information woven throughout the novel, but the facts about the chestnut tress were my favorites. I'm so old that I remember when VA had those trees, and I loved raw chestnuts. I do hope these projects will bring the trees back.

Comment From Lydia PA ☺☺☺

Garnett believes that pesticides are the only way to protect his crops and trees, which is in complete contrast with Nannie's organic methods. They spend much of Garnett's story bickering over the relationship between man and nature and how to work in harmony with nature

Comment From Lydia PA ☺☺☺

I liked that by the end of Garnett's story, he and Nannie have learned a great deal about one another and have learned to listen to and compromise with each other. They have also found a mutual affection for each other in their old age

Comment From TerryMI

I liked the lesson the church people got after killing the bees.They had to clean up all that honey off of the floor.

Comment From Peggy from Pungo(VABeach)

Even though Garnett wants to be left alone, he can't help making contact with his neighbor Nannie and later Lusa when she calls him to ask about goats.

Comment From Lydia PA ☺☺☺

I read that Kingsolver considers this her most difficult novel, as the issues being considered are more important in the book than the characters themselves.

**Raina Krasner, WCV:**

The characters she developed were very important vehicles for sharing those issues, it seems.

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

Yep, he couldn't resist sharing his expertise! The best way to engage people. :)

Comment From Lacy

I liked how Nannie Rawley turned Garnet's logic upside down. He understood chestnut reproduction and crosses and that lent to his understanding of how pesticides work and are flawed when Nannie explained. Theirs was a cute story.

Comment From Lydia PA ☺☺☺

(psssst---CN, do you all know that Ramona is Raina's mom?)

**Raina Krasner, WCV:**

She is!

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

I loved the scarecrow bit...

Comment From Peggy from Pungo(VABeach)

Laughed when Garnett went over to protect Nannie from the guy hanging around only to discover it was a scarecrow.

**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**

Ha, yes. Lots of funny little moments between those two.

**Raina Krasner, WCV:**

And the "snapper" situation ...

Comment From Lydia PA ☺☺☺

There were definitely moments of humor in this book.

Comment From Brenda from Virginia

No, I didn't know. It's great having two staff members' moms with us!



Raina Krasner, WCV:
Supportive families!

Comment From Lydia PA ໒໒໒໒?

Everyone returns to a clan of some sort--again the coyote analogy--even Deanna goes back to have her baby and raise it with her father's girlfriend

Comment From Lydia PA ໒໒໒໒?

The one thing that bothered me a bit was Kingsolver perhaps divides the world too easily into male and female: between the women protectively in tune with nature, and the male hunters and farmers who strive to tame it. The men are simply wrong; they change and are embraced, or stand firm and are rejected.

Comment From Lydia PA ໒໒໒໒?

And notice the theme of the alpha females? they all had their children and raising them with the help of others in their clan. The coyote analogy



Amanda Nicholson, WCV:

True. I appreciated her ability to weave a lot of good, real information into a story, but sometimes I did think it was a little oversimplified ... black/white.

Comment From ROK in Cville

In case I can't get on the book club discussion, I thought she got a little preachy at times, but I liked the way she showed that not only the wild world is all connected, so is the human world, and that when relationships are broken, the individuals are also incomplete.

Comment From 33mama

Garnet was a good name for him since he kept ending up flustered and red-faced.

Comment From Lacy

Poor Mr. Walker... he was always finding himself in funny predicaments concerning Nannie.

Comment From Brenda from Virginia

Sapper the turtle vs Snapper the lawn mower was hilarious.

Comment From Mary E in NC

Moms, you have lovely daughters!

Comment From Lydia PA ໒໒໒໒?

(I think you should volunteer at WCV with me once in awhile Ramona. Raina is going to be my trainer. Guess you would have to have a different one--LOL)

Comment From Darleen in NC

I thought Garnett's story did a great job of highlighting the issues that older people have to deal with - especially when they live alone. I was holding my breath when he was driving into town.

Comment From Mary E in NC

I live in Winston-Salem and the tobacco growing part in the book was really interesting. When I first moved here, the smell of tobacco being made into cigarettes wafted over the town. Now that tobacco plants are closed, farmers are forced to grow something else.

Comment From Brenda from Virginia

Even though the story is set in modern times, I had the feeling that it was happening in the past because of that simplification.

Comment From Lydia PA ໒໒໒໒?

You are right 33! Did not make that connection until you said it--Garnet and red faced



Raina Krasner, WCV:
So many little connections!

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

Sometimes I wondered if lives are really that black & white in small farming communities.

Comment From Mardie in Seattle

Had to take an ill-timed call, so I'm going to have to scroll back after all. No, I didn't know Ramona is Raina's mom! Good to know. Takes me back to when you were "Amanda's mom" Lydia.



Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
So, some parting thoughts ...

Comment From Sharon in Fl

The book really makes you think about how ones actions have a ripple effect on nature and life.

Comment From Brenda from Virginia

There is also the theme that it's never too late to change and another that nature needs humans to work with it and protect it.

Comment From Kathy in NM ♥

I never would have picked up this book to read if not for Book Club. I really enjoyed the well written strong character studies and the constant nature themes and information throughout the book.

Comment From Brenda from Virginia

If one didn't already know that Kingsolver is an environmentalist, he or she would after reading this book.

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

Some times it takes a lot of work to figure out what "completes" you.

Comment From Lydia PA ☽☼☽?

The final chapter is different from all the other chapters. It is from the perspective of the coyote. This coyote travels through the valley and back up the mountain. It hints at the growth of her family and the new families that are arriving.

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

Did anyone else think that the final chapter could have been Deanna coming down the mountain or the coyote?



Raina Krasner, WCV:
That is an interesting way to look at it!

Comment From BarbG

I thought that

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

It worked both ways for me! Until she said she was going back up. :)

Comment From Becky in SoCal

I really enjoyed this book. I grew up in a small town (500) surrounded by farms and it much was familiar. I love the book club because I read books I never would buy and read.

Comment From Brenda from Virginia

The book teaches many valuable lessons about the intertwining of all aspects of nature and does it in an engrossing manner.

Comment From Lydia PA 🇵🇦🇵🇦?

The last chapter—31—told from perspective of the alpha coyote is a perfect ending. She revealed new family of coyotes coming to the area. Scented the male of another clan. Especially love the last lines of chapter 31: “Solitude is a human presumption. Every quiet step is thunder to the beetle life underfoot, a tug of impalpable thread on the web pulling mate to mate and predator to prey, a beginning or an end. Every choice is a world made new for the chosen”

Comment From Peggy from Pungo(VABeach)

Jersey Shore Amy, I did think it was Deanna at first then I noticed the chapter did not have a title.

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

Deanna was very reflective of what was down the mountain.



Raina Krasner, WCV:

Wow, you all saw a lot more than I did in this book!

Comment From Becky in SoCal

Yes, Jersey Shore Amy, I thought that also.

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

Oh good, at first I thought I was losing it!

Comment From Brenda from Virginia

I took it to be the coyote and an indication that the coyote pack will survive despite the hunters.

Comment From Sharon in Fl

That was my big question Jersey Shore. Was it Deanna or the coyote. I decided that it was the coyote. Another intermingling of nature and humans.



Raina Krasner, WCV:

So how would you all rate this book?



Amanda Nicholson, WCV:

(out of five stars)



Raina Krasner, WCV:

Right. Yes. The Goodreads scale.

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

A SIX!

Comment From Peggy from Pungo(VABeach)

Five stars

Comment From BarbG

5

Comment From Mary E in NC

5!

Comment From Brenda from Virginia

Five stars.

Comment From Becky in SoCal

Five

Comment From CK in Pa

I did Jersey S. Amy!



Raina Krasner, WCV:

I agree - 5 stars!

Comment From Mardie in Seattle

At first I thought the last chapter was Deanna, but soon saw it as the coyote. I'd rate it 5.

Comment From Ramona

Very interesting Amy. I like that perspective.

Comment From BarbG

Makes me want to read more of her books

Comment From GN

Good beat, easy to dance to. A 5 I suppose.



Raina Krasner, WCV:

Oh, GN.

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

So other than Poisonwood Bible, what's the next Kingsolver novel I should read?



Amanda Nicholson, WCV:

Poisonwood Bible!! :)

Comment From CK in Pa

5

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

But I already read that one. :)

Comment From Peggy from Pungo(VABeach)

Try the Bean Trees

Comment From Lydia PA ☺☺☺?

A 5 rating from me!



Amanda Nicholson, WCV:

So sounds like five stars from everyone!



Amanda Nicholson, WCV:

Next book is ...



Amanda Nicholson, WCV:

(date TBD)

Comment From Brenda from Virginia

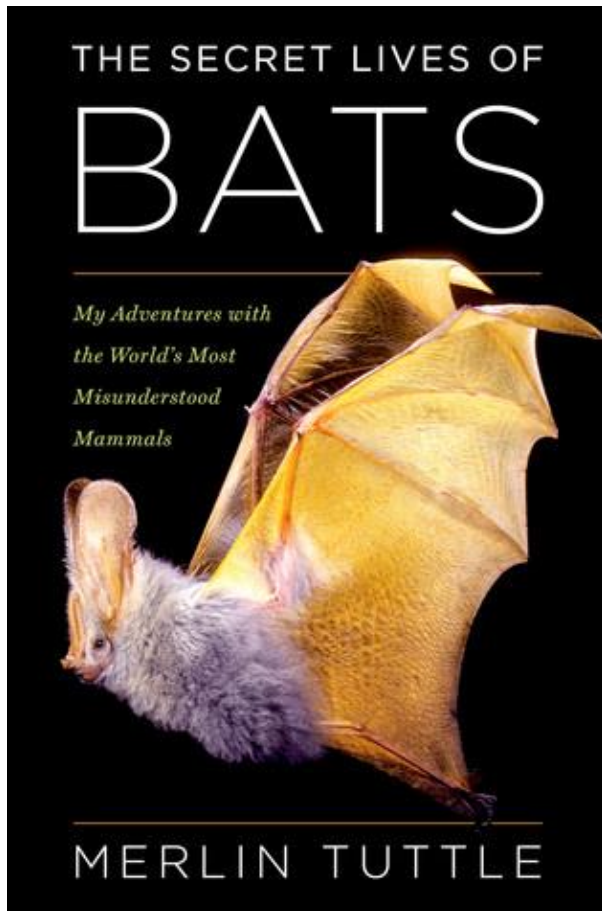
Thanks for another great discussion, WCV folks. Which book will we be reading next?

Comment From Ramona



Raina Krasner, WCV:

The Secret Lives of Bats by Merlin Tuttle



Amanda Nicholson, WCV:

We'll set a date for October!

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

oh! I want to put up a bat house!

Comment From BarbG

thanks for another great book club

Comment From Mary E in NC

Looks interesting!

Comment From Becky in SoCal

Can't wait to read it. Love bats.

Comment From Brenda from Virginia

Fantastic! I love bats and haven't read this book yet.

Comment From Ramona

And Mary..Ramanada is (are) aware of what very nice daughters they are..:)

Comment From Peggy from Pungo(VABeach)

Thanks, Amanda, Raina and chatters for being here. great discussion.

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

Thanks, Peggy!

Comment From Lacy

Thanks for a wonderful discussion, guys! I love hearing your viewpoints. You think of things that I would otherwise miss :)

**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**

Yes, very insightful comments!!

**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**

Good book club, everyone!

**Raina Krasner, WCV:**

Me too! It's so cool seeing the different perspectives.

**Raina Krasner, WCV:**

Thanks for joining us tonight!

Comment From Darleen in NC

I enjoyed the book but had difficulty getting into it at first. Another connection between the stories that I don't think I saw mentioned was that all three dealt with death from different directions.

Comment From 33mama

5 for sure

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

It made me realize that I've never seen a luna moth!

**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**

Okay, good night, all!

Comment From Becky in SoCal

Thank you.

Comment From Lydia PA ☺☺☺

Super Book club! Thank You!

Comment From Lydia PA ☺☺☺

Yes they are Ramona. And when I move to VA they better look out. Ramona and I are getting together. Ramona has to teach me where to go to eat and shop for one thing :)

Comment From CK in Pa

Thanks Amanda, Raina & CN for another great book club.

Comment From GN

The next book is about baseball?

Comment From Ramona

Very well done. Thank you.

Comment From Mary E in NC

Glad to have you here, Ramona! Thanks, Amanda and Raina, for a great book club night!