

THE WOLF WANTS IN

LAURA
MCHUGH

Discussion Questions

1. Siblings Becca, Shane, and Sadie grew up in an abusive home. How did this shape them and their relationships with one another? How did it affect their lives and relationships as adults, even after their father passed away?
2. After Shane's death, Becca and Sadie learn that their brother had been keeping secrets from them. He hid bad things, like financial and marital problems, but also good things, like his relationship with Charlie and Leola. Why do you think he kept so much hidden from his family? How did Sadie answer that question for herself and make peace with it in the end? Have you ever discovered something surprising after the passing of a loved one? If so, how did you deal with it?
3. Addiction touches many of the characters in the small town of Blackwater, either directly or indirectly. Hannah struggles with prescription painkillers; Henley grows up with an addicted mother in a family of drug dealers; Sadie witnesses the epidemic firsthand in her job as a social worker. In what ways, both obvious and unexpected, does the opioid epidemic impact families and entire communities?
4. Haunted by the tragic death of his sister Emily and the loss of his young wife, Earl Sullivan tries to be a good person but sometimes fails. How did Emily's death impact Earl? Was there anything he could have done to prevent his son's crimes? Do you think his failures outweighed his good intentions? In the end, what drove him to take his own life?
5. When Henley gets involved with Jason Sullivan, she has no idea that the relationship will become abusive. Did her situation make her more vulnerable to Jason's controlling nature, or do you think anyone could have been susceptible to his manipulations? What tactics did he use to gain control? What were some of the early warning signs that Henley missed or disregarded?
6. Sadie and Hannah are unlikely friends. What draws them together before and after Hannah's daughter's disappearance? How does Hannah's addiction affect their friendship? How do they help each other heal?
7. After finding some closure in Shane's case, Sadie seems to accept the fleeting nature of life, stating, "This dog might yet outlive me." Determined to make the most of the time she has, she opens herself up to new dreams and new relationships, including a romance with Theo, Shane's childhood friend and his dog Gravy's veterinarian. What role did Gravy play in helping Sadie and her family navigate life without Shane and come to terms with his death? How is Sadie's relationship with Theo different from her relationship with her ex-husband, Greg? Do you foresee a happy ending for her?
8. At the end of the novel, Henley has left everything behind and started a new life, just as she'd always dreamed. Still, she brings one piece of Blackwater with her: Her new name is Emily, after Emily Sullivan. What significance did Emily have in Henley's life? Do you think Henley will truly be able to escape her family and her past? How will Missy and Charlie move forward without her? How do you think Shane would have felt about Henley's efforts to give closure to his family?
9. What was your interpretation of the novel's title and did its meaning change for you over the course of the book?