

An abstract painting with thick, expressive brushstrokes in shades of purple, pink, red, yellow, green, and blue. The composition is layered and textured, with some areas appearing more saturated than others.

BOOK
CLUB
KIT

THE ALL-NIGHT SUN

A NOVEL

DIANE ZINNA

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Lauren and Siri's relationship is the central tension in *The All-Night Sun*. Was their relationship inappropriate? If so, when, in your opinion, was the first line crossed? Did their relationship remain inappropriate after the school year ended and Lauren was no longer Siri's professor? Why or why not?
2. Both Lauren and Siri lost their parents at relatively young ages. How does each react to her fate differently? How do these reactions affect their lives?
3. When friends and strangers ask about her parents, Lauren often lies. "The idea of them drowning in a car—I feared that by sharing it, the image would continue to live in people's minds," she says. "I came to believe the most polite thing to do was let the memory of it die inside me. And part of me started to die away with it." Do you agree that lying, in some instances, is the "polite" thing to do? How do these lies keep Lauren from processing her grief?
4. Lauren often talks about how much she loves her teaching job—she considers it one of the only things she has in life. And yet, she's quick to risk it all for the chance to travel to Sweden with Siri. Why do you think this is?
5. What does the Sweden trip represent for Lauren? What is she hoping to find? What kind of person does she hope to become?
6. Where else have you seen the Midsommar festival represented in popular culture? How do these representations differ? How are they alike?
7. In Sweden, Lauren begins to see a different side of Siri—cold, cruel, full of anger. Do you think this side emerged when Siri went home, or was it always there and Lauren just didn't see it?
8. How does author Diane Zinna use Swedish folklore throughout the book?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

9. Why do you think Magnus buries his mother's portraits?
10. What draws Lauren to Magnus? What do they have in common? Do you think they could have had a relationship if not for Siri?
11. After Magnus draws the portrait of Lauren and Siri sitting back-to-back, Lauren runs away without looking at it. Why do you think she does this?
12. What does the annotated guidebook symbolize? How does what happens to the guidebook mirror Lauren and Siri's friendship?
13. Why do you think Lauren didn't jump out of the van when Karin did?
14. "She was at the age when she was supposed to be reckless," Lauren says of Siri. "I was at an age when I was supposed to be responsible." Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?
15. Frida, in her essay, accuses Lauren of "[using] her class like her own personal therapy session." Do you agree with this assertion? Overall, do you think Lauren was a good teacher?
16. Just like she lied about her parents, Lauren lies about Siri after her return from Sweden to avoid facing the truth about what happened to her. How do these lies keep Lauren from processing her grief? Have you ever been tempted to lie about something to avoid the truth? Do you think it's possible to both know and not know something?
17. "When you don't share your stories," Lauren says, "you eventually lose their normal starting places." Why is it important to share your stories and memories? What is the balance between dwelling on the past and ignoring or forgetting it?

MIDSOMMAR FESTIVAL

Midsommar in Sweden: A Cherished Tradition

The formula for a successful Midsommar (or midsummer) never-ending lunch party involves flowers in your hair, dancing around a pole, and singing songs while drinking unsweetened, flavored schnapps. You'll also be downing a whole load of pickled herring served with delightful new potatoes, chives, and sour cream. All in all, a grand day out.

When is Midsommar?

The actual day that is celebrated is Midsommar Eve, and it always takes place on the Friday between June 19th and 25th. Midsommar Eve 2020 is June 19th.

Where can you celebrate Midsommar?

Most Swedish people celebrate Midsommar by going to somebody's summer house, garden, or to a lake with friends. You can celebrate anywhere, as long as it is outdoors! Each little town will have several small spots where they raise a Midsommar pole, and people—usually families with children—will come and dance, play games, and picnic together during the day.

Who can celebrate Midsommar?

Everyone!

How to do Midsommar like a local

Get invited by a local. You will probably go to someone's summer house ("sommarstuga") which will ensure you get the full experience.

If you're not lucky enough to get an invite, a safe bet to celebrate with Swedish friends (that you don't know yet) is visiting **Skansen** in Stockholm or a public park.

For a really traditional celebration, Dalarna is the place to be. They arrange **multiple events leading up to the big day**. In **Gothenburg**, the city Lauren and Magnus explore in the book, public festivities happen at Gunnebo castle and gardens.

Source: VisitSweden.com

CELEBRATE MIDSOMMAR

Food

- Have a *smörgåsbord* with *lax* (salmon), *potatis* (potatoes), *sill* (herring), *köttbullar* (meatballs), and *jordgubbar* (strawberries) for dessert. (In *The All-Night Sun*, Siri and Karin teach Lauren how to say the word for strawberry ice cream, *jordgubbsglass*, while resting beside the lake.)

Drink

- Midsommar's Eve is one of the biggest drinking holidays in Sweden. People usually bring their favorite alcoholic drinks to enjoy the night, and there will usually be a quick shot of flavored schnapps to say cheers with everyone. People will also sing traditional drinking songs.
- One of the most common tunes you'll hear is "**Helan Går**" (Or "The whole thing goes," referring to the drink). A loose translation of some of the lyrics would be "Chug it down, Sing 'hopp faderalla lallan ley,' Chug it down, Sing 'hopp faderalla lallan ley,' And he who doesn't chug it down, Then he won't get the other half either."

Party

- Enjoy the sunshine and set up a Midsommar pole for dancing.
- Wear white, blue, or floral print clothing.
- Decorate the table with small Swedish flags and flowers.
- Play outdoor games, like **kubb**.
- Wear a *midsommarkrans* (midsummer wreath) on your head. **See the next page for instructions on how to make your own.**
- As Siri tells Lauren at the campsite, Swedish tradition says that if you pick seven kinds of flowers (in some parts of Sweden it's nine) and put them underneath your pillow, you'll dream about your future husband or wife.

The Midsommar Pole

- At the center of the traditional celebrations is the maypole, in Swedish called the *Midsommarstången*. Many people believe it originated as a symbol of fertility. Others say the shape has its roots in Norse mythology, and that it represents an axis linking the underworld, earth, and heavens.
- Dance like little frogs around the Midsommar pole, singing *kuwakaka kuwakaka kuwakakakakaaaa*. **Watch actress Alicia Vikander do the Frog Dance** on The Tonight Show to learn how. (Swedes pretend they do it mainly to entertain their children, but they love to do it even when there aren't any children near the Midsommar pole.)

Source: HejSweden.com; TheLocal.se

MIDSOMMAR FLOWER CROWN

Step 1: Select your flowers

Typical Midsommar wildflowers include daisies, meadow buttercups, klöver, and cow parsley—but don't forget to include a few of your favorite blooms to make it really stand out.

Step 2: Create the base for your flower crown

Cut a thin branch with green leaves to fit in a circular shape around your head. Then, cut a few 4-5 inch pieces of florist wire to have ready for later steps.

Step 3: Secure the crown's shape

Gently bend the branch into a circular shape to form a loose crown around your head. Cut off any excess branches and seal together with wire. Wrap with wire several times for extra security. (You can create a crown without floral wire like Siri did in the book, but it's harder. Make sure you have long enough stems so you can wrap them around the bottom a little off to one side. Add the next flower on top to lock it in place as you work your way around.)

Step 4: Organize flowers into small bouquets for your crown

Arrange small bundles of wildflowers and greenery into little bouquets. Make sure to leave enough stem room in order to attach each bouquet to the crown.

Step 5: Add blooms to your crown

Using the prepared florist wire from before, attach the small bouquets onto the crown in a similar direction.

Step 6: Rock your new Midsommar-ready flower crown

Once you're pleased with the amount of flowers on your crown, pop it on your head and enjoy.

Source: Sleek-mag.com