

Carry: A Memoir of Survival on Stolen Land (Oral or Written) Discussion Questions Guide

General Discussion Questions

What is one key point or issue the author is making or tackling in the text?

What the author's take or stance on this key point or issue?

What's going on in the world, in our nation and/or even locally that makes this text and the author's stance timely? Give some real world examples.

What tone of voice does she use in the text? Find a few examples.

Discuss the book's structure and the author's use of language. Give examples.

What do you think motivated the author to share his or her life story?

Discussion Passages

"When I show him day drinking, then, please note there are other day drinkers lined up beside him on their stools. Please note all of them are this thing America calls white. They are all striving to be better at whiteness, at prosperity. They are all failing" (Jenson 26).

"It's okay, I've learned, to love the things that make you, even if they also are the things that unmake you" (Jenson 28).

"I walk around each day, including this one, in my white-privilege raincoat. It doesn't matter much that the sleeves are too short, the shoulders tight; I know I'm wearing it" (Jenson 30).

"My whole life this will be what I want from friendship, from love: movement in sync with language, language in sync with movement and laughter. My whole life I will want these pieces unified, together, a trinity most holy in its ordinary magic" (Jenson 30).

"Of course, I knew she was Kiowa. Of course, I objected to the language, the 'part.' Which part? The back of the left knee? The curve of the right ankle? The crook of an elbow? How many ways do we carve ourselves up and portion out our parts, our bodies for other people's comfort?" (Jenson 52).

"He was trying to tell me the student is difficult, is trouble, is to be avoided. But the phrase 'bag of snakes' and his casual delivery made me want to defend her. I thought, if this is how her faculty are, how brave she must be to have brought with her only one bag of snakes. I thought, She needs to go home on the weekend and collect the other three bags." (Jenson 57).

"To study the tangled, contested history of this space considered campus is to enter into a deep conversation about why some spaces are considered hallowed when they are, in fact, stolen" (Jenson 61).

"In our country, the myth of individualism pushes us to ignore structures that create tensions and pressures in individuals, yes, but also in families, in communities. But that's not how people are made, in isolation, with only some notion of character or goodness to form them." (Jenson 102-3).

"When we police a woman's affect, when we privilege it or equate it with her actions, with what she actually does, we're engaging in our most pervasive and yet our most quiet form of sexism, our most quiet form of everyday violence" (Jenson 111).

“This is in the early 2000s, and it amuses me, nearly twenty years later, when people write about the new gig economy, the new second job, the new hustle. There’s nothing new, of course, about any of it. What’s new is how members of the upper middle class now are part of this experience. Once it’s theirs, it’s a subject to be studied and written about endlessly. It’s a situation, an epidemic, an important cultural shift” (Jenson 129).

“But I’m suggesting once a woman’s labeled difficult, she’s put on a shelf, untouchable— and not in the Madonna/whore sort of way. Rather, she’s put up on a high shelf, rendered literally untouchable, as in—don’t touch, don’t speak to, don’t vote for—ignore, ignore, ignore at all costs” (Jenson 139).

“If you have a room full of women and a separate room full of men, all but one of the women not only will know what I mean by the phrase ‘arrange her face,’ but also, as the words are spoken, she will execute the maneuver” (Jenson 147).

“If more wealthy Americans own guns than do those living in poverty, why do we have such difficulty fitting this fact into our collective gun narrative?” (Jensen 232).

“I’m proud of her and then sheepish about this pride. In other words, I don’t know what to feel or how to feel. I’m an American, perhaps, after all, complicit and conflicted and worried” (Jensen 237).

“It’s important for Americans to begin to see these men as our neighbors, our co-workers, our sons—because they are. Before they act, they are often considered the good guy with the gun. We do ourselves no favors by pretending otherwise” (Jensen 258).

“What’s right with people, though, of course, sits alongside what’s wrong. What’s right is found in the simple ways we work despite contagion toward connection” (Jensen 263).