

Vanishing Falls

By Poppy Gee
(William Morrow, 2020)

‘Something in his chest tightened as he went out the front door and stood on the veranda. The wind made his eyes water. Lightning cracked above the poplar trees. A woman did not wander out into the heaviest rain Vanishing Falls had received that winter, for no reason.’

Vanishing Falls is Poppy Gee’s second novel. It is set in a fictional rainforest town in northern Tasmania. On a cold, wet night, a socialite disappears from her historic country mansion. Amidst the valley’s damp beauty, locals are drawn together to solve the mystery and risk their own dark secrets being exposed.

Vanishing Falls Discussion Questions

1. Joelle is an unusual person. What advantages does a character such as her have in helping solve a crime?
2. Which characters were you suspicious of and how did this change as you read the novel?
3. Do you think the villain was justified in committing the crime? How would they justify it to themselves?
4. Readers have mixed reactions to Brian Smithton. Some warm to him, some are uncertain. What kind of man do you think he is?
5. Celia Lily is beautiful, popular and privileged, which makes it easy for her to appear to be good-hearted. Do you think she is a good person?
6. Joelle faces a moral dilemma toward the end of the novel. Do you think she makes the right choice, or did she have too much to lose?
7. How do you feel about Miss Gwen? Is her story sad or hopeful?
8. There are several ways that the book’s title, Vanishing Falls, relates to the narrative, particularly to Joelle and Kim. Now that you’ve finished reading, does the title have more meaning?
9. There are a range of smaller characters: Alfred Cheng, Mr Keith, Nev, the Keegans, Victoria Lily. Which ones were your most/least favourite?

10. Jack and Cliff have a complicated relationship. They are both flawed. What was your opinion of them, and the effect they have on their families?