

Discussion Questions for *Lone Wolf* by Jodi Picoult

(Most questions taken or adapted from

http://books.simonandschuster.com/Lone-Wolf/Jodi-Picoult/9781439102749/reading_group_guide)

1. Is the book's title a good one?
2. Edward and Cara strongly disagree over whether to keep Luke on life support. Which character did you think was most likely to know Luke's wishes? Did your opinion change over the course of the novel?
3. What emotions, such as guilt and anger, influence Edward and Cara's decisions about how to handle their father's coma? In your opinion, how much weight should the paper Luke signed before he went to Canada have carried? Should Cara's age have prevented her from being next-of-kin?
4. Cara sees her father as a hero whereas to Edward he is all too human. Why was Cara so much closer to her father than Edward was? Did this portrayal of a family's dynamic remind you of any relationships in your own life?
5. At the scene of the accident, an EMT tells Cara that if it wasn't for her, her father might not be alive. She thinks: "Later, I will wonder if that comment is the reason I did everything I did...Because I know her words couldn't be farther from the truth." (p. 8) When you learn what Cara means, does it justify her actions, including accusing her brother of attempted murder? If she hadn't felt such guilt, do you think she would have been less opposed to ending her father's life? Why or why not?
6. What motivates Edward to arrange for the termination of his father's life after Cara says, "I can't do this. I just want it to be over."? (p. 143) Why does he overlook her earlier objections? How did you react to the scene in which Edward pulls the plug on the ventilator?
7. Luke is the most enigmatic character in the book—a man in a coma, a man torn between the wolf and human world. How do his chapters balance what you learn about him from the other characters? How would the novel and your understanding of Luke and his relationship with wolves have been different without those chapters?
8. Georgie knows Luke is unusual from the moment she meets him, and she's attracted to his rawness and vigor. Was it fair of Georgie to expect Luke to live a conventional life? Was it unfair of Luke to expect Georgie to sacrifice her own hopes?
9. Luke seems torn between his love for his wolf family and for his human family; and ultimately his human family suffers. Do you think he loved his wolves more, as Edward believed? Do you think he ever could have found a happy medium between the two worlds?
10. Consider the role each member of the Warren family plays in the family unit both before and after the family dissolves. How does the family compare to a wolf pack, where "everyone has a position in it; everyone's expected to pull his own weight."? (p. 14) Do you think the Warrens know and understood each other as well as the wolves seem to know each other? Is there one person to blame for the family's break-up? What could the family have done differently to prevent the collapse?

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11. Discuss the Warrens' family issues that have long gone unspoken or misunderstood, such as Edward's reason for leaving. What other issues have the Warren family avoided? What were the repercussions of doing so? How would you characterize the way they relate?
12. Why do you think Edward kept his reason for leaving a secret for so long? When he reveals the truth in court, how do Cara and Georgie react? Do his revelations about Luke have a bearing on the hearing?
13. Georgie says of her children, "You may never admit it out loud, but the one you love the most is the one who needs you more desperately than his siblings." (p. 271) Do you agree? Discuss why and how she favors each of her children at different points in the novel. How does it affect her relationship with Joe to be on the other side of the aisle during the hearing?
14. The moment when Luke opens his eyes and seems to follow Cara is a compelling one, but Dr. Saint-Clare explains that it is merely a reflex. Did you agree with Cara's perception or the doctor's? Did it change how you felt about Luke's chances?
15. Picoult writes: "Hope and reality lie in inverse proportions inside the walls of a hospital." (p. 70) How do Cara, Georgie, and Edward's experiences give truth to this statement? Did Dr. Saint-Clare's testimony affect your belief in the kind of medical miracles Cara hoped for?
16. Ultimately, both the advocate and the judge reach the same conclusions about whether Luke would want to live or die. After reading the chapters from Luke's point of view, what do you think he would have wanted? In a situation such as this, can there be an answer that is wholly right or wholly wrong? Discuss.
17. Would you recommend this novel to a friend?
18. Are there any questions you would like to ask?