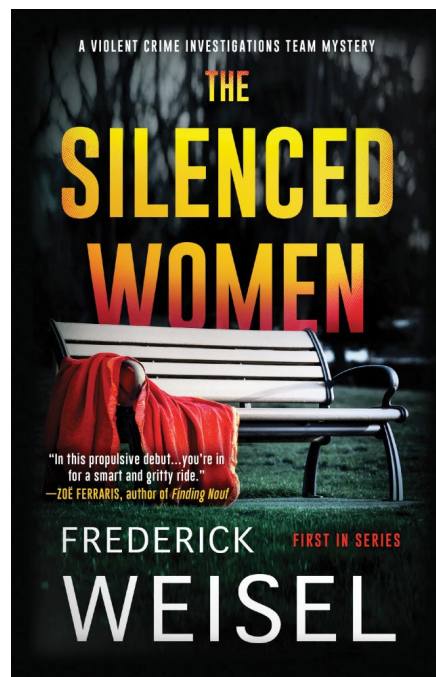


Discussion Questions for THE SILENCED WOMEN



1. In this mystery, the killer's identity is revealed early on. This structure makes the novel not a traditional mystery "whodunit" but a "howcatchem". Did this difference influence your enjoyment of the novel?
2. Eddie Mahler has imaginary conversations with a victim who was killed. Why do you think he does this? What clues does he learn from these conversations?
3. What does each of the five detectives contribute to the investigation?
4. Throughout the story Eddie Mahler suffers severe migraines and accompanying hallucinogenic scotoma. Have you or anyone you've known had migraines? Was your experience with them similar to Mahler's?
5. Eden Somers, who has a background as an FBI analyst, is trying to learn a different craft of criminal investigation and interrogation. What does she learn in these investigations? What does she bring to these investigations from her FBI history?
6. Mahler's former girlfriend, Kate Langley, asks him what he wants. She says, "My therapist says we're not grown-up until we can ask ourselves that question and honestly answer it." Do you think that's true? What do you think Mahler wants?

7. Retired detective Tommy Woodhouse tells Eden that the Latin root of the word “arrogance” is related to the word “rogation,” which is prayer. “Arrogance” is the inverse and means to presume to not need prayer. How does Ben Thackrey’s arrogance impair his judgment?
8. How is the victim Elise Durand portrayed in the novel—through her employer, friends, mother, and Ben Thackrey?
9. Which characters did you root for in the novel?
10. Detective Daniel Rivas recalls his Aunt Malena telling him, “When you get older, Danny, love looks different. It’s still there, if you’re smart or lucky, but now it’s in her eyes, or a joke between you, *un chiste*, or the food you make for each other. The trick is to see what the love is in your life and not to expect what it isn’t.” Do you think that’s true?
11. Police Chief Truro tells Eddie Mahler that you can understand what eighteenth-century artists were trying to do by paying attention to the “quality of light” in the paintings. Later Mahler tells Eden to look for the quality of light in her investigation of the killing of young women. What do you think he means?
12. This novel uses actual names of places in Northern California—in Santa Rosa, Sonoma County, and San Francisco. Did the descriptions help you visualize them?
13. Which scenes in the novel affected you the most? How did they affect you?