

READING GROUP QUESTIONS FOR WE RUN THE TIDES

What do you think the title of this novel might signify? How does it relate to the themes and questions of the book?

This novel is set in pre-tech boom San Francisco in the eighties—a place on the verge of transformation—and among a group of girls whose lives are also changing. How do you think the time and place figure into the unfolding of the story, and what details stood out to you, specifically?

Eulabee and Maria Fabiola have a very particular friendship. How would you describe their relationship, and how does it change throughout the course of the novel? Did this friendship remind you of any other relationships in literature? What about the other friendships among the young women in their group?

There is a secret at the heart of this novel, but it's not what you might think from reading the early chapters. Discuss the role of deception in *We Run the Tides*—how do lies and half-truths affect the central friendships of the story and the way we see these characters?

Maria Fabiola's disappearance upends the quiet lives of the residents of Sea Cliff and reveals that "everything ugly is hidden," as Eulabee puts it. What do you think she means by this? How does this statement relate to the way that class and status are represented in the book?

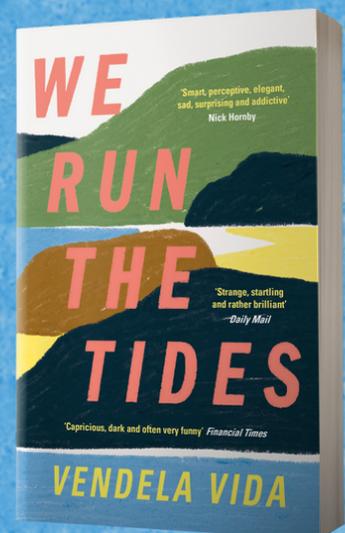
We Run the Tides is a coming-of-age story that deals with first love and betrayal, as well as the search for identity in a world that can feel hostile. Discuss how these themes play out in the lives and stories of the major characters. Which of these moments stayed with you the most, and why do you think they had a particular impact?

Discuss the first-person voice of this novel. What is Eulabee's tone, and does it change throughout the book? What would this book have looked like if written in the third person?

Eulabee describes a push to conform, to be "replicas," and Maria Fabiola says, "the only way out [is] to be extraordinary." How do you see this exhibited in the novel? In what ways are the characters conventional or unconventional? And how does this relate to the Edith Wharton epigraph at the beginning of this book?

How do you imagine these characters—especially Eulabee and Maria Fabiola—in their later lives? What do you think might happen to them down the line?

We Run the Tides author Vendela Vida had this to say about the origins of her novel: "Growing up in San Francisco in the eighties, you felt like you were arriving to a party that had just ended. Wherever you went in the city, you were reminded of more romantic days. North Beach had the Beats; the Haight had the Summer of Love. You had nothing but the yellow Tower bag you filled with records, hoping to capture another time and place. That's the San Francisco I knew growing up—it was cold and foggy and gray, and kids had to make their own drama." What do you make of this description, and how does the novel relate to your own experience growing up? What part do nostalgia and memory play in this book?



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