



Timber Rose Book Club Questions



Timber Rose is set in early 20th century Pacific Northwest in a time when Seattle was coming into its own as a shipping magnate for fishing, lumber, mining, and other commercial enterprises. It is also a time when the growing middle class is taking interest in the great outdoors and preservation of the beautiful, sometimes harsh landscape that is part of the region. The rise of progressive women in many cultural and political endeavors is also an element of this time in the Pacific NW. Here are some questions for book club members that might inspire future discussions.

1. Caroline Symington comes from a privileged background. Bob Alford is from an immigrant family. How are they alike and not alike? What strengths and interests do they bring to their marriage? Have you heard stories like this in your own family?
2. Caroline wants more than anything else to be her own person, including choosing the man she wants to marry and what dreams she wants to pursue. Do you think this was realistic for a woman in 1907 and pre-WWI? What obstacles did she face? What about healthcare?
3. The Forest Service as we know it began nationwide in 1905 under Teddy Roosevelt. Were there things in the story that surprised you about its early days? How important do you think it was in developing the wilderness as a place for ordinary people to enjoy? What do you know about Forest Service history in your state?
4. Who is your favorite character? Why? Who would you like to know more about?
5. Ford and Harold Symington represent extremes in the often contentious big lumber business. Men in the field worked under dangerous conditions for long hours then come back to housing and food that was substandard. Lumber mills were just as dangerous. Often there were strikes throughout the NW. Do think going for the 8 hour days was a good goal? Did you know that it started here in the NW woods? Darius Kinsey took many photographs of the industry. Some of his subjects were at “clean” camps.”
6. Caroline and her friends in Frazer have a woman’s club. These organizations were popular in rural communities, providing support for women in daily life in the wilderness, but also education, community service, friendship, and yes, book clubs. Are they like any woman’s club you know of today?
7. The Mountaineers and Mazamas are real clubs that were created in the early 20th century (Mazamas, 1890s on top of Mount Hood, Oregon) Almost 50% of their memberships were women. What does that tell you about this period in the NW?
8. Micah Thompson represents a not well-known part of NW history: Hawaiians. His background is not that unusual. His father was Scots - a geologist and miner -- and his mother Hawaiian/Coast Salish. Many of the early settlers in the North Cascades worked with or for the Forest Service as their experiences were invaluable. Their connection to the region brought mystery and strength to a struggling organization not fully appreciated until the Big Burn in Idaho around 1911.
9. What are the main ideas --themes-- does the author explore? Does she use symbols to reinforce the main ideas?

10. What passages strike you as insightful? A bit of dialogue that's funny or poignant and that encapsulates a character?
11. Is the ending satisfying? If so, why? If not, why not?
12. If you could ask the author a question, what would you ask?
13. Has this novel changed you --broadened your perspective? Have you learned something new or been exposed to different ideas about people or a certain part of the world?