

Reading Group Guide

The Return to Evenshore

by Talia Morrowe

About the Book

Dr. Helena Rowan has spent ten years running from the magic of her childhood home. But when her grandmother Maeve passes away, leaving behind a house full of secrets and a town full of whispers, Lena is forced to return to Evenshore.

As she navigates the complexities of grief and the rekindling of old flames with Sheriff Cal Tanner, Lena discovers that Maeve's legacy is more than just herbal remedies and local folklore. The Breathwood is waking up, and something ancient is stirring in the fog.

Discussion Questions

Character & Relationships

- Helena's Journey:** How does Lena's relationship with her grandmother Maeve evolve throughout the story, even after Maeve's death? What does Lena learn about herself through this process of grief and discovery?
- Cal Tanner:** Discuss the dynamic between Lena and Cal. How does their shared history in Evenshore both complicate and strengthen their reconnection? What role does trust play in their relationship?
- The Rowan Legacy:** The Rowan women have been "keepers of balance" in Evenshore for generations. What does this legacy mean for Lena? How does she

reconcile her scientific training with the magical inheritance she's been avoiding?

4. **Community & Isolation:** How do the residents of Evenshore view the Rowan family? Discuss the tension between being needed and being feared in a small community.

Themes

1. **Magic vs. Science:** Lena is a trained botanist who has rejected the magical aspects of her upbringing. How does the novel explore the relationship between empirical knowledge and intuitive or magical understanding? Can they coexist?
2. **Grief & Inheritance:** What does the novel suggest about the ways we inherit not just possessions, but also responsibilities, secrets, and power from those who came before us?
3. **Home & Belonging:** Lena has spent a decade away from Evenshore. What does “home” mean in this story? Can you ever truly leave a place that shaped you?
4. **The Cost of Power:** Throughout the book, characters make bargains and sacrifices. Discuss the theme of cost—what must be given up to gain something, whether it's knowledge, safety, or love.

Setting & Atmosphere

1. **Evenshore as Character:** How does the setting of Evenshore function almost as a character in its own right? Discuss specific moments where the town, the fog, or the landscape actively influences the plot.
2. **The Breathwood:** What does the Breathwood represent? How does Morrowe use the forest to create tension and mystery?
3. **Gothic Elements:** This novel has been described as “coastal gothic.” What elements of gothic literature do you recognize? How does the Pacific Northwest setting enhance or change traditional gothic tropes?

Plot & Structure

1. **Secrets & Revelations:** The story is built on layers of secrets—family secrets, town secrets, and magical secrets. Which revelation surprised you most? Were there any you anticipated?
2. **The Green Fog:** Discuss the significance of the Green Fog. What does it represent literally and symbolically?
3. **Maeve's Grimoire:** If you had access to Maeve's knowledge, would you use it? What responsibilities come with that kind of power?

Looking Forward

1. **Unresolved Questions:** What questions do you still have at the end of the book? What do you hope to see explored in the sequel?
 2. **Lena's Choice:** By the end of the novel, Lena has made significant decisions about her future. Do you agree with her choices? What would you have done differently?
-

Themes to Explore

- **Inheritance and Legacy:** What we receive from previous generations, wanted or unwanted
 - **The Liminal:** Spaces and times between—fog, dusk, thresholds
 - **Feminine Power:** Women as healers, protectors, and wielders of dangerous knowledge
 - **Nature and Magic:** The relationship between the natural world and the supernatural
 - **Grief and Transformation:** How loss changes us and what we become in its wake
 - **Small Town Dynamics:** The weight of history and reputation in close-knit communities
-

About the Author

Talia Morrowe writes stories where souls meet the strange and beautiful. Drawing on folklore, the natural world, and the liminal spaces between what we know and what we fear, her work explores the magic that lives in the margins. She believes in the power of old stories to illuminate new truths.

The Return to Evenshore is the first book in the Evenshore Chronicles.

Enhance Your Book Club Experience

- **Atmospheric Reading:** Consider reading passages aloud, especially the more lyrical descriptions of the Breathwood or the fog. How does Morrowe's prose create mood?
 - **Herbal Tea Tasting:** Serve herbal teas inspired by Maeve's remedies—chamomile for calm, mint for clarity, lavender for dreams.
 - **Map Exploration:** Visit www.taliamorrowe.com/world to explore the interactive map of Evenshore and discuss the significance of each location.
 - **Create Your Own Sigil:** Inspired by the magical symbols in the book, have each member design a personal sigil representing something they want to protect or invite into their lives.
 - **Coastal Gothic Playlist:** Create a shared playlist of music that captures the mood of Evenshore—atmospheric, haunting, and beautiful.
-

Further Reading

If you enjoyed *The Return to Evenshore*, you might also like:

- *The Night Circus* by Erin Morgenstern
- *Mexican Gothic* by Silvia Moreno-Garcia
- *The Invisible Library* by Genevieve Cogman
- *Practical Magic* by Alice Hoffman

- *The Starless Sea* by Erin Morgenstern
 - *The Bear and the Nightingale* by Katherine Arden
-

For more information about Talia Morrowe and the Evenshore Chronicles, visit:

www.taliamorrowe.com

Follow on social media: @TaliaMorrowe

This reading group guide was created to enhance your book club experience. We hope these questions spark meaningful conversations about magic, family, and the places that shape us.