

Off the Map

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Carla tends to use her “machete of truth” when discussing something important, whether it be telling Eamon to stand up to his mother or getting Anna to see how the choices she made after Ben’s death are responsible for where she is today. In Chapter 13, Carla claims her machete of truth is “a gift and a curse.” Do you agree with her statement? Do you think it is a gift? A curse? Or both?
2. As his elder sibling, Eamon has always felt as though he had to bear the burden of responsibility for Keane. Do you think he envied Keane for receiving so much individual attention? Why do you think Eamon works so hard to please his mother?
3. Carla has been traveling the world on her own in her Jeep for nearly a decade. She lives the life Eamon has always desired but never pursued himself. If he had not met Carla, do you think he would ever have had the courage to follow his dreams? What would his life have looked like?
4. Carla and Eamon took multiple detours on their way to Tralee: the Wicklow Mountains, the Gallaghers’ house, the surf festival in Ballybunion. Which detour is your favorite and why? How might their journey have played out differently if they had stuck to the original plan?
5. Biggie sent Carla away so she would not have to deal with his dementia. Do you think Carla made the right decision to continue traveling the world on her own? Or should she have stayed behind to help Stella take care of him?
6. Do you think Biggie would have liked Eamon if they ever had the opportunity to meet? How do you think their first interaction would have played out?
7. Biggie claims that he used travel as a way to keep Carla occupied and distracted from her emotions. This kept her from being able to connect with other people in a meaningful way. Do you think Biggie’s decision to keep Carla distracted was justified? If not, what should he have done differently?
8. During the wedding, Carla exposes the truth to Mrs. Sullivan about Eamon’s dreams and the miserable life he created for himself in order to please her. Would Mrs. Sullivan ever have realized the sacrifices her son made for her if it weren’t for Carla pointing it out? Explain.
9. Carla and Eamon hit it off from the moment they met. When do you think the moment was when Eamon fell in love with Carla? When did Carla fall in love with Eamon?
10. As the story concludes, Carla and Eamon decide to take another detour before meeting Anna and Keane overseas. Based on all the detours they took on their way to Tralee for the wedding, do you think they will make it back in time? What do you think the future holds for Carla and Eamon?

