

A Readers Guide for

Solitary Walker: A Novel of Mary Wollstonecraft

by N.J. Mastro / njmastro.com

To invite N.J. Mastro to your book club discussion via Zoom or in person, contact her at nancy@njmastro.com.

1. If Mary Wollstonecraft were alive today, how would modern women characterize her? Would it be different from how supporters and critics judged her in the eighteenth century?
2. What qualities did you like best in Mary and why? Which did you not like about her?
3. Would Mary have been successful were it not for Joseph Johnson investing in her as he did with money and emotional support? Have you ever had a mentor who provided you with substantial direction in your career or personal life? How did this impact you?
4. Compare Gilbert Imlay to William Godwin. How could Mary love two such different men? What attracted her to each? Have you ever loved men or women who are complete opposites?
5. Mary was not perfect. She possessed many faults and contradictions, making her human. Which fault(s), or contradiction(s) appealed to you most and why? Which left you feeling frustrated or disappointed in her?
6. Was Mary trying to kill herself when she took the laudanum? What about when she jumped off the bridge? Was she serious about ending her life?
7. Mary appears to be a smart woman who sometimes did foolish things. Do you agree? Have you ever done something foolish and later regretted it? Or did the experience, painful as it might have been, help you grow as a person?
8. How have things changed for women since Mary's lifetime? What things remain the same? Have women achieved the kind of liberty and equal opportunity for which Mary rallied during her short life?
9. Have you read anything about Mary Wollstonecraft before reading this novel? If so, in what way did *Solitary Walker* further illuminate her as either a feminist or as a historical figure? If you've not heard about her before, do you plan to find out more about her?
10. Do you believe Mary Wollstonecraft truly was the world's first feminist?