

Questions for Discussion – CHOSEN by Chandra Hoffman

1. *Chosen* is told from multiple characters' points of view. How did these diverse voices inform your reading and your perceptions of the characters? Would the novel have been a completely different story if told by one narrator?
2. Message boards play an integral role in Francie's story. What do you make of her online relationship with Eva versus their in-person dynamic? How does their reliance on electronic communication affect their bond and the events that unfold between them?
3. Desire, both for people and objects, is a central theme in the novel. As Penny says on p. 160, "Maybe she shouldn't want things anymore. But she does." Why does she feel that way? What does each couple want most? Can wanting something too much be dangerous? Use examples from the book.
4. Many people believe Chloe is motivated to help build families as a social worker because of the tragedy of her childhood—the loss of her own family with the death of her mother. Is Chloe trying to vicariously rebuild the family she lost? Does her work make her happy or fulfilled? What kind of qualities does a person need to be successful in a job like Chloe's? Do you think you could do what she does?
5. On p. 139, Chloe asks Paul if he believes in soulmates and he answers, "I believe in being the best partner you can be. The rest follows." Do you consider any of the couples in this book to be soulmates? How do you define "soulmate"? Do you think Paul and Chloe were the best partners they could be? How did Chloe's job affect her romantic life? List the various ways each of the novel's couples help and hurt one another.
6. There is a budding relationship between Paul and Chloe during the middle of the novel. What is each looking for in the other? What, if anything, do their interactions belie about their relationships with their partners?
7. Jason is often the novel's most foreboding character, but, as Chloe points out, he cried into her neck when his son was born. What is your opinion of Jason? What drives his behavior? How much of his behavior is driven by his own nature and desires, and how much by the circumstances of his life that are beyond his control? Are any of his actions understandable? Do you see redemption for him and Penny?
8. *Chosen* is a layered portrait of domestic adoption and ultimately a cultural reflection of contemporary America. How do race, class, and gender intersect in the adoptions in this novel?
9. Why do you think the author chooses to have the resolution of Wyeth's abduction narrated by three different "Anonymous" voices? Did you read them as the same person? Who do you think Anonymous is?
10. The novel begins in Portland, Oregon, and ends in Hawaii. Why do you think the novel ends there? Did the ending leave you with any unanswered questions? Do you think all the families are finally happy?