



Blaze Island Discussion Questions

1. Why does the author often refer to Miranda as 'the girl?'
2. Do you think it's justifiable to solve drastic climatic issues with unproven methods?
3. What do you think about the relationship between Miranda and her father?
4. How do Caleb and Miranda see their lives unfolding differently? How are their visions of the future similar?
5. What purpose is Frank meant to serve to in this story?
6. Alan often promises to take care of Miranda, saying: "We'll weather the weather together." Do you think he fulfills his promise to her?
7. Sylvia says rain and wind are not the same, that weather has changed from what it was many years ago. Has weather changed from what you remember as a child? Have you noticed changes in our climate?
8. "How swiftly she'd learned that your life can be ripped without warning from your hands." Miranda has lost her mother and home at an early age. Do you think this has made Miranda stronger?
9. The community in *Blaze Island* lives "close to the land" and tries not to use too much power to lower its carbon footprint. Miranda learns to grow and harvest and preserve her food. Sylvia makes her own tinctures and teas. And Agnes shows Alan how to use every part of a seal. Could you learn to live like this?
10. Alan says: "We're not at war but sometimes things feel like a war, there's so much money and power arrayed against people like us, and those people are swaying other people not to believe that humans have anything to do with the warming weather." (p. 72) It's difficult to convince "deniers" to believe the truth about climate change. Why do you think some people deny climate change? Does it feel like we are fighting a war against climate change and people who deny it?
11. Caleb says being an outcast "was something that everyone agreed on" (p. 215). Both Caleb and Miranda were outcasts in school, and Caleb was also an outcast in his family. How did being an outcast shape Caleb's personality? What about Miranda? Did being an outcast affect them in the same way?
12. "The lesson he wished to teach her above all was kindness; To be kind to all things." (p. 156) Alan teaches Miranda to be kind and respect all creatures. Do you think he values connections to animals and nature more than connections to people?

13. What do you think Miranda will do now that she knows the truth about her life and the life outside her island? What are her plans? Will she stay on the island or become an activist with Frank?
14. If Frank had not arrived on the island, would Miranda have wanted to know more about the outside world? Would she have been content staying on her island?
15. Miranda did not have access to the internet, was not permitted to go into town and did not have a cell phone, even in adulthood. Does a parent have the right to isolate their child from the world?
16. The author used Shakespeare's play *The Tempest* as the basis for her story. Have you read *The Tempest*? Do you see the similarities?
17. Alan had to start a new life with his daughter in hiding because of death threats and danger to their lives from his views on climate change. Why does climate change evoke such strong emotions in people?
18. If you had the opportunity to live on Mars, or another planet, should Earth's climate become too poor or harsh, would you?
19. Agnes says: "Weather is undependable as most humans are." (p. 56) Do you agree with this statement?
20. Prospero used magic to get his way in *The Tempest*. Alan alludes to needing some magic for his "plan." Other elements of magic include Caleb becoming another creature (p. 62) and Miranda's out-of-body experience (p. 175). What power or significance does magic hold in this story?
21. Agnes says, "We are entering times of dangerous weather and that weather is inside us as well as outside." (p. 23) What do you think she means by this statement?
22. Alan tells his daughter the story of Sedna, who marries a stranger and moves to a remote island. The father tries to take his daughter back but the seabird husband, who is a magician, becomes angry and causes a storm. What is the significance of this story?
23. With recent climate disasters in the news -- forest fires in California and Australia, floods in Australia, a snowstorm in Texas -- do you think climate change will continue to create disasters?
24. If the technology exists to control and manipulate weather and to halt climate change, should it be used? Do we have a responsibility to see what can be done to save the planet, no matter the methods used?