

Discussion Questions

***Cleo McDougal Regrets Nothing* by Allison Winn Scotch**

1. Describe Cleo McDougal. Prickly, yes, but does that make her unlikable in your eyes? Does your opinion of Cleo change over the course of the novel? If so, how and why? Same for "no"—if your opinion of Cleo doesn't change, why not?
2. (*Follow-up to Question 1*) Consider Cleo's rise, at the age of 37, to the position of a U.S. Senator and possible presidential contender. What does it take to reach those heights, not just as a male but, more to the point, as a female?
3. (*Follow-up to Question 2*) While this book isn't explicitly political, it takes place in the political arena. What are the double-standards in the political world that author Allison Winn Scotch explores? Is the sexism in politics different from, say, the corporate, professional, academic, or scientific worlds?
4. Cleo refuses to accept offers of help from others. Why? Is it because of her idea of self-reliance... or perhaps it has to do with the power dynamics involved in allowing others to help, at least according to Cleo? Do you know people like that? Are you yourself prone to decline someone's offer of help?
5. Talk about Cleo's familial relationships. How would you describe her as a mother? What about Lucas—do you find his teenage snark funny? What about the fact that Cleo has not dealt with the matter of Lucas's father? Then there is Georgie, Cleo's younger sister. What's the history behind their relationship which makes it so difficult?
6. What do you make of Cleo's list of 233 regrets? Why has she compiled such a list and kept it up over all these years? What is the purpose of the list?
7. Talk about your own regrets: do you have your own list? Maybe your regrets tend to be simply vague, uneasy memories that occasionally (or frequently?) crop up to remind you of your missteps. Or perhaps they're more pronounced. Have you ever made attempts to repair the missteps in your life which you regret?
8. Gaby decides that Cleo should address the top 10 regrets at the top of her list in order to repair her reputation. Does that mean that Cleo's regrets—and her desire for reparations—are inauthentic? Discuss Cleo's journey as she goes about attempting to atone for her missteps.

9. By the end of her journey, what does Cleo learn about what it takes to become a truly good person? In fact, how would you define the qualities of a "truly good person"—what is required to be one? Does Cleo become that good person?

(Questions by LitLovers)

