

Reading Group Guide

1. Many of the stories in *Roar* deal with visibility. Some women fade away, some try to gain representation in politics, and others try to avoid being seen altogether. How do some of the women make themselves visible throughout the book? How do you think women can make themselves seen in today's society?
2. Throughout the book we see women supporting one another in various ways. How do these support systems function, and how do they affect the characters' lives?
3. Many women in these stories are relegated to labels. In "The Woman Who Forgot Her Name," the protagonist can only recall her various titles or nicknames like "Mummy" and "Honey," while "The Woman Who Was Pigeonholed" focuses on the various tags that overtake a person's identity. What labels apply to you and other women you know, and how do you feel about them?
4. Which story (or stories) in this collection resonated with you the most? Why?
5. Think about how love is portrayed in *Roar*. Do you think it helps the women in the stories, hinders them, or does it depend on the story and kind of love?
6. In "The Woman Who Walked in Her Husband's Shoes," a woman says, "It was what life was like for him that intrigued her. The normal stuff that he couldn't communicate because it just *was*, because it wasn't different, or didn't seem out of the ordinary." Why do you think this was important to her? Do you ever feel this distance in your own life?
7. In "The Woman Who Wore Pink," gender is strictly marked by pink or blue bracelets. In "The Woman Who Found the World in Her Oyster," a transgender woman is invited to lunch by her ex-wife with whom she parted on bad terms. These and other stories in the collection question the rules we use to dictate who is and is not female. To you, what does it mean to be a woman? What does it mean to be female? Do you find these definitions important? Empowering? Confining?
8. In "The Woman Who Blew Away," the doctor says, "Her brain is vacuous. It's busy, but it's filled with thoughts predominantly about herself. Because of this there is nothing of any substance in her brain." What do you think the doctor means by "substance"? What gives you substance in your own life?
9. How do you see traditional assumptions about women portrayed in this collection? Where do these assumptions come from?

10. In “The Woman Who Roared,” we meet many different women from all sorts of walks of life who feel the need to roar. Have you ever felt this urge? If so, why? Why do you think these women feel like they have to roar secretly?
11. “She watches as, with her permission, his nervous but warm long slender fingers open the pouch and take hold of her beating heart. She understands now that it is hers; nobody but herself is its keeper. She controls it.” What do you think this moment represents? Can you find similar moments in other stories?
12. Why do you think the author chose to refer to all of the protagonists as “the woman”? How would it change your reading of the collection if they had names?
13. Many of these stories revolve around taking a common phrase and making it literal, as seen in “The Woman Who Wore Her Heart on Her Sleeve.” What are some of the other examples of this device? Why do you think the author chose to explore these idioms in this way?
14. Why do you think “The Woman Who Roared” is the final story in this collection? What significance does the book’s title have?