

Wan by Dawn Promislow

Discussion Questions

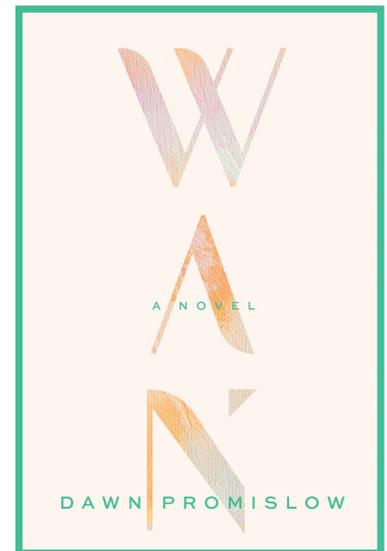
1. *Wan* is a story told from the perspective of one person, Jacqueline Kline. She tells the story in her own voice: it is a first-person narrative. What is the effect, or what are the consequences, of this choice by the author? Why do you think the author might have made this choice?
2. Jacqueline is a powerful person by virtue of her privilege as a white person during apartheid, but she is also a disempowered person. How is she a disempowered person, and do you think she empowers herself over the course of the novel?
3. What do you think is the “meaning” of Jacqueline’s white painting? What do you think she meant to express in her painting? Do you think she succeeded?
4. What did *Wan* reveal to you about apartheid South Africa, that you didn’t know before?
5. What do you think of the title of the novel? What does it mean to you?
6. Mention in the novel is made of “chastity.” (“Is chastity harder to believe, than the carnal?” — page 183.) What are the different reverberations or even meanings of this word, in the novel? Who, if anyone, is a ‘chaste’ person, in *Wan*? In contrast, who is morally compromised?
7. If you have read Damon Galgut’s novel *The Promise*, do you think the view of South Africa that that novel puts forth is different from that expressed in *Wan*? What do you think *Wan* expresses about the attainment of freedom in South Africa?



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was born and raised in Johannesburg, South Africa, and has lived in Toronto since 1987. Her collection *Jewels and Other Stories* was published by Mawenzi House in 2010. *Wan* is her first novel.

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