

**READER's GUIDE - GENERAL QUESTIONS**

*Discussion & Reflection Questions for the Book*

Authors: Cherie Lutes, Jalynn Bacon-Dorow & M.T New

1. The title refers to a “Scatterling”—someone displaced, scattered across places, carrying both freedom and loneliness. In what ways does Louis embody this identity?
2. The book opens with a photo of two-year-old Louis van Tonder with his father, Kanna. What was your first impression of this image, and how did your perception change after reading the book?
3. In the “Author’s Notes,” what heartfelt plea does Louis make to readers? If you were to write your own memoir, what message or legacy would you want to leave behind?
4. Louis enjoyed a carefree, unsupervised childhood in rural South Africa. What are the benefits and risks of growing up with such freedom—particularly during the 1950s and ’60s?
5. The African saying “Time waits for no man” appears throughout the book. How does it reflect Louis’s choices, urgency, and worldview over the years?
6. At age 13, Louis won a pigeon race and used the prize money to buy a Rolex watch—one he still wears 60 years later. Do you have an object or heirloom that holds deep personal meaning?
7. Louis rejected apartheid, but his father Kanna held more traditional or conflicting views. How did this ideological tension affect Louis? How do family influences shape personal beliefs?
8. In high school, Louis’s mother Riekie forced his best friend Lou out of their home. Louis said this betrayal left a deep emotional scar. How do childhood traumas shape a person’s emotional life?

9. Louis described the camaraderie of military service as deeper than family. Why do you think those bonds form so strongly in such environments? Have you experienced something similar?
10. Louis's friend Bart Saaiman often said, "We can run out of money, as long as we don't run out of plans." Has that kind of mindset helped you during hard times?
11. As a professional hunter, Louis eventually came to view trophy hunting as unethical, favoring photography safaris instead. What are your thoughts on this evolution? How did Louis handle the moral complexities of his career?
12. Louis married in 1976, raised three children, and divorced in 2001. He wrote, "Divorce is in some ways worse than death." What do you think he meant by this, and do you agree?
13. Terri, whom Louis met in 2002, once said: "No matter what, I just put one foot in front of the other and take it one step at a time." Do you relate to this approach to life?
14. How would you describe Louis's writing style—candid, humorous, emotional, philosophical? Did his voice, dialect, or storytelling enhance your reading experience?
15. Did the book offer new insights into historical or political issues? Were there areas you wish the author had explored more deeply? Which event or moment stood out most to you?
16. What traits—strengths, flaws, and growth—did you observe in Louis across different life stages? Which did you find most admirable or relatable?
17. Did the book lead you to reflect on your own childhood, family, or personal history? In what way?

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18. What historical events shaped Louis's journey most powerfully? How did he respond to them?
19. Among the many themes—apartheid, military duty, family struggles, shifting ethics, career changes—which resonated with you most?
20. What lessons did you take from Louis's ability to persevere through adversity?
21. Do you believe friendships, classmates, and colleagues can be just as important as family? Why or why not?
22. How did Louis's emigration affect your understanding of the immigrant experience? Did it deepen your empathy?
23. Themes of friendship, loyalty, identity, personal growth, war, family, culture, and global issues recur throughout the book. Which theme most affected you?
24. How did Louis's early years shape his values, decisions, and worldview as an adult?
25. What did you learn about Louis's skills as a hunter and his understanding of animal behavior?
26. How did Louis adapt throughout his career? What lessons can be learned from his resilience and reinvention?
27. Who were the most influential figures in Louis's life, and how did they shape his story?
28. How did Louis's cultural roots influence his experience? Reflect on South Africa's apartheid era (1948–1994). Did the book change your perspective? How does it compare with America's history of segregation?

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29. Have you ever felt “hiraeth”—a longing for a place that no longer exists? How did Louis’s reflections on his past capture that feeling?
30. What is a Scatterling, and why does Louis identify with the term? How do the “winds of change” echo through his life?
31. The book vividly describes South Africa’s landscapes, wildlife, luxury trains, helicopters, and cuisine. Did it inspire you to visit or consider a photo safari? What argument does Louis make for eco-tourism?
32. Louis and Terri married in 2005 and now live in Prescott, Arizona. Louis writes that they “Celebrate every day, every breath, and every moment shared.” Does that philosophy resonate with you?
33. Overall, did you enjoy the book? Did you connect with Louis’s story? Would you recommend it to others? Why or why not?
34. **We’d be truly grateful if you would consider writing a review.** Your thoughts help other readers discover the book and support our efforts to share this journey. If you’re open to it, just send us an email at [Louis@AfricanSafaris.travel](mailto:Louis@AfricanSafaris.travel), and we’ll send you the link to post your review.

### **Further Questions:**

Based on the themes and arcs present in the memoir, here are several additional thought-provoking questions you could include in your book club discussion:

### **Legacy, Identity, and Transformation**

1. Legacy of the Land: How does the author’s deep connection to the African landscape shape his identity throughout the book? What does he carry with him from Africa, and what does he leave behind?

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2. Name and Identity: The author transitions through many roles—soldier, lawyer, hunter, conservationist, immigrant, husband, and father. How do these identities conflict or complement each other over time?

3. Cultural Navigation: What challenges does the author face as he moves between cultures—Afrikaner, African, and American? How does he reconcile his traditional upbringing with his evolving worldview?

### **Resilience, Love, and Reinvention**

4. The Role of Resilience: The author endures war, personal loss, divorce, career shifts, immigration, and health crises. What qualities allow him to continually reinvent himself? How might his upbringing have influenced this strength?

5. Second Chances in Love: How does the love story with Terri differ from his earlier relationships? What makes their bond feel restorative or redemptive?

6. The Healing Power of Purpose: How do shared goals like conservation, storytelling, and charitable work provide emotional healing for the author and Terri?

### **Family, Reconciliation, and Forgiveness**

7. Generational Wounds: How do unresolved tensions with the author’s parents—particularly his mother—echo through his adult life? Do you think he ever finds peace with those past traumas?

8. Parenting and Legacy: How does the author’s relationship with his own children evolve, particularly through conflict and reconciliation? What does this say about cycles of parenting?

9. Chosen Family: The author speaks lovingly of “Mom and Dad,” his in-laws, and other non-blood relationships. What does this tell us about his view of family? How do chosen bonds differ from biological ones in the memoir?

### **Broader Themes**

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10. Ethics and Transformation: The author once hunted for sport and profit, later turning toward conservation and photography. What does this evolution say about changing personal ethics? Can people fundamentally change?

11. The Role of Synchronicity: The memoir frequently references coincidences and meaningful chance encounters. Do you think the author sees his life as guided by fate, faith, or free will?

12. Final Reflections: If you could ask the author one question about his life's journey, what would it be?

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