

Questions for discussion: *The Other Wife*

Who is “the other wife”?

What is the novel about?

Discuss the theme and significance of “the enemy within”.

How can you relate autoimmunity to love?

How many different kinds of love are represented in the novel’s narrative?

Why are there several narrators?

What is the significance of Burt’s profession?

What is the role of the burns victim Gertrud Leutenegger?

How do you respond to Ted Harris’s behaviour, in particular his guilty conscience and self-judgment?

In what way is it significant Ted and Burt are mates?

How do you evaluate Burt’s attempt to take over the narrative?

What is Burt’s attitude to Yvonne?

What is the significance of Ted’s affair with Jana Novotny?

How do you respond to the treatment of sexual relations in the novel?

Do you believe abstention from sex is possible (or desirable) in marriage?

How do you see the character of Miriam Delander?

Is Ted happily married at the end of the novel?

How do you interpret the analogy of autoimmunity, especially the human T-cells of ‘self’ and ‘not-self’, to social relations?

Is guilt a judgment of law?

Does Ted Harris deserve the reader’s sympathy?

How did you respond to Yvonne’s pathologically erratic behaviour?