

***SWIFTLY FLOWING WATERS*: DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Why do you think Pat Lamondin Skene, the author, decided to write *Swiftly Flowing Waters*? What makes her story worth telling?
2. Comment on the structure of the book. Which part did you find most compelling? Which part would you like to know more about? Was there any part that went on too long?
3. How would you describe the author? What do you feel is her strongest quality? What is her weakest? What makes her voice authentic?
4. How do you think Pat wanted the reader to feel while reading her story? What is your takeaway from her story?
5. What are some choices Pat made that you admire? Are there any choices that you find less admirable? What is there to learn from Pat’s experiences?
6. Which parts of Pat’s story did you relate most strongly to? Were there any parts that you think would have been better left unsaid?
7. Why does Pat say it took so long to leave her husband Rick? Do you think there were other factors at play?
8. Who do you think had a bigger role in Pat’s life: her mother or her father?
9. Pat titles the last part of her memoir “What Took You So Long?” After reading her story and getting to know her, how would you answer this question: what took her so long to become who she wanted to be?
10. Discuss the significance of Pat’s Indigenous heritage to her journey. What parts of her life story would have or could have been different if her indigeneity had been a more acknowledged part of her early life?
11. Is the title appropriate? Can you suggest a different one?
12. Consider the following statements from *Swiftly Flowing Waters*. Which ones are most important to understanding the author and choices she made?
* “It took the profound experience of grief and coming face to face with the finality of death to make me think more deeply about the path I’ve been on. I’m not afraid of dying — it’s the living and growing old that’s the scary part.”
* “It’s been a long upward hike for a shy little Métis kid from the sticks. So, how did I get to this point in my life and where do I go from here?”
* “At every challenge along the way, I may have arrived late, frightened, and vulnerable, but I showed up and did the best I could.”
* “… somewhere between the lines of this book, that young woman who crossed the Rocky Mountains so long ago found the courage to set herself free.”
* “I’m an ordinary woman who stretched herself to face life’s challenges and is at peace with knowing and accepting who she is.”