Discussion Guide



Fresh Banana Leaves: Healing Indigenous Landscapes Through Indigenous Science Jessica Hernandez, PhD

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Summary

Through case studies, historical overviews, and stories that center the voices and lived experiences of Indigenous Latin American women and land protectors, Hernandez makes the case that if we're to recover the health of our planet—for everyone—we need to stop the eco-colonialism ravaging Indigenous lands and restore our relationship with Earth to one of harmony and respect.

Questions

- 1. The author's father taught that "nature protects us as long as we protect nature." Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?
- 2. What do you think about the Indigenous practice of milpas? What are your thoughts about western farmers adopting this practice?
- 3. The author states, "If our landscapes were not degraded to make space for extractive agricultural practices, or huge cities, our landscapes would be protecting us from any climatic changes the earth underwent." (pg.31) Do you agree with this? Why or why not? Have you seen this in practice?
- 4. Have you ever considered that urban environments are often indigenous spaces? Has reading more about this impacted your views on land acknowledgements and ways to include local indigenous communities?
- 5. Many scientific fields use numerical data to support their claims. What do you think about the author's assertion that this invalidates traditional communities? Do you think lived experiences or personal narratives should be included more often in research?
- 6. What were your thoughts about displaced, nonnative plants as being related to migratory or displaced human beings? Were you surprised to learn about any of these nonnative species?
- 7. In what ways do you think Western ideologies have removed people from the land? Do you think Indigenous ideologies will help make for healthier environments? Why or why not?
- 8. What do you wish you could ask the author? What would you ask other environmental scientists?
- 9. Who do you wish would read this book?
- 10. Has reading this book made you want to make any changes in how you protect the land? Which ones and why?

