

## Book Club Discussion Guide



Indians On Vacation by Thomas King, Page 1 (May 2023)

# Indians On Vacation

By Thomas King

## About the author:

THOMAS KING is an award-winning writer whose fiction includes *Sufferance*; *Indians on Vacation*, which won the Leacock Medal for Humour; *Green Grass, Running Water*; *Truth and Bright Water*; and *The Back of the Turtle*, which won the Governor General's Literary Award. *The Truth About Stories* won the Trillium Book Award, and *The Inconvenient Indian* won the RBC Taylor Prize, as well as the BC National Book Award for Canadian Non-Fiction. King's first collection of poetry, *77 Fragments of a Familiar Ruin*, was shortlisted for the Nelson Ball Prize. A Companion of the Order of Canada and the recipient of a National Aboriginal Achievement Award, Thomas King taught at the University of Lethbridge and was chair of American Indian Studies at the University of Minnesota. Following this, he taught at the University of Guelph until he retired. Thomas King lives in Guelph with his partner, Helen Hoy.

Source: <https://www.harpercollins.ca/author/cr-100072/thomas-king/>

## About this book:

Inspired by a handful of postcards sent nearly a hundred years ago, Bird and Mimi attempt to trace long-lost uncle Leroy and the family medicine bundle he took with him to Europe.

"I'm sweaty and sticky. My ears are still popping from the descent into Vaclav Havel. My sinuses ache. My stomach is upset. My mouth is a sewer. I roll over and bury my face in a pillow. Mimi snuggles down beside me with no regard for my distress.

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‘My god,’ she whispers, ‘can it get any better?’”

By turns witty, sly and poignant, this is the unforgettable tale of one couple’s holiday in Europe, where their wanderings through its famous capitals reveal a complicated history, both personal and political.

Source: <https://www.harpercollins.ca/9781443460545/indians-on-vacation/>

### Discussion Questions:

1. For Mimi, travel is a way to explore or escape, while Bird seems worn out during the entire trip. In what way do you think their different perspectives affect their shared travel experiences? Whose approach to travel do you most identify with?
2. When you read books that explore different locales, do you look up the areas to have a better visual picture when reading the story? Did you look up any pictures for this book?
3. Are there any points in the novel that caused you to question how the tourism industry operates? How do you feel about travelling to countries experiencing crisis?
4. What did the introduction of the demons add to the story? Was it significant that Mimi, not Bird, named his demons? Did you have a favorite demon?
5. The character Oz is always there to greet Bird, but never gets to meet Mimi. Do you think Mimi believes that Oz could be another one of Bird’s demons?
6. What did the quest for the medicine bundle add to the book?

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7. How do you feel about the way systemic racism was addressed in this book?
8. A recent review described Bird and Mimi as “two youngish seniors” who have a shared history and are not immune to hurt feelings. How would you characterize their relationship?
9. Bird is feeling dissatisfied with his professional contributions to the world. How is that impacting his overall wellbeing?

Source: <https://www.clarington-library.on.ca/bookclubinabag>