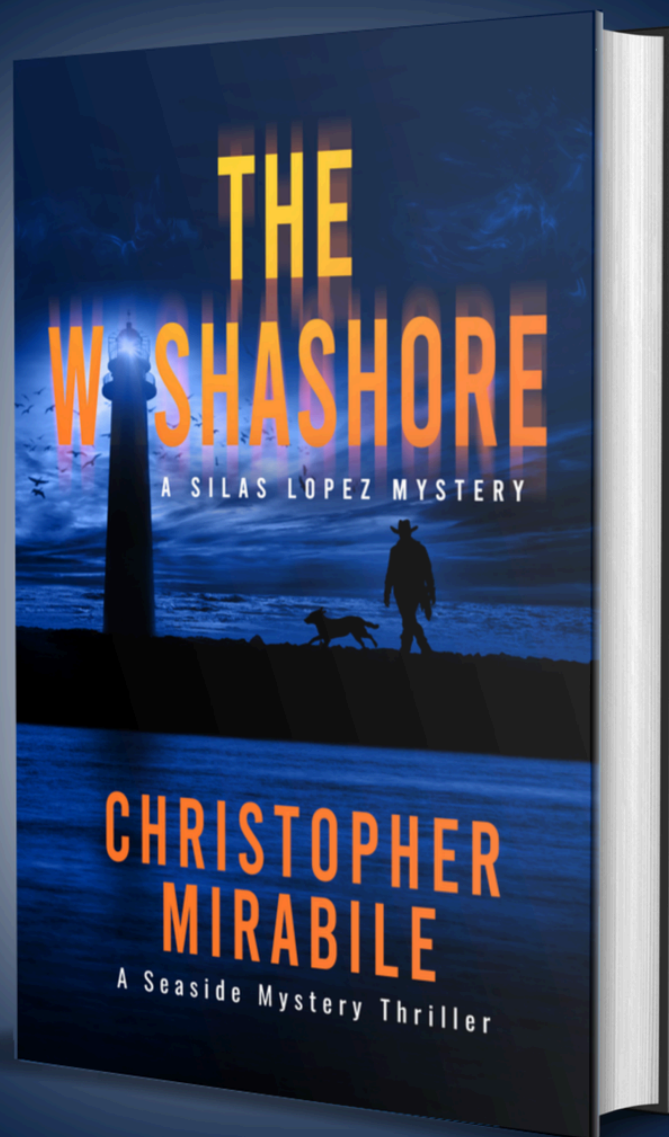


CHRISTOPHER MIRABILE'S
**THE
WASHASHORE**
BOOK CLUB COMPANION GUIDE



An essential guide for book club discussion,
including exclusive material from the author



DEAR READER,

Thank you so much for choosing to discuss *The Washashore* with your book club. As a book club member myself, I know that adding a few book-themed touches and some starter questions make meetings more fun. That's why I've pulled together this question list and a couple of Silas' favorite recipes, which I hope you'll enjoy.

You'll find plenty to think about in the suggested questions. There's a variety of question categories including what makes Silas tick, the relationship between Silas and Wren, the book's atmospheric setting, Silas' style as a leader and mentor and even some questions touching on the nature of justice, so there should be something to interest every group.

This story and its characters are very meaningful to me. Of course I wanted to entertain you, but I also wrote it with the hope that an ordinary everyday hero—flawed like all of us, but determined to do the right thing and find justice for victims—might not only provide some temporary refuge from our collective doomscrolling in these troubled times, but also renew your faith in people and institutions just a little bit.

Silas might be a fictional character, but I believe there's a little bit of his goodness in all of us.

Christopher Mirabile



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Book Club Questions

Note on using this guide: you don't need to cover everything—follow what interests your group and see where the conversation leads.

GETTING STARTED QUESTIONS

- What moment from the book has stayed with you the most since finishing the book? Why?
- Was there a moment when your opinion of Silas changed? What caused that shift?
- Which character (besides Silas) felt the most real to you? Why?

WHO IS SILAS LOPEZ?

- If Silas had a motto or catchphrase to summarize his life philosophy, what would it be?
- Silas doesn't say much. Is he an effective communicator nevertheless?
- Is Silas's manner of speech involuntary, or is it a strategy to disarm people and make them underestimate him?
- Did you notice that one of Silas's senses is especially acute? Which one?
- Is Silas bent on doing the right thing, or is he just a vigilante? Rules exist to protect the public, but they can get in the way of doing the right thing. How comfortable do you feel about a cop like Silas? Does intention matter?
- Is Silas's propensity for violence a character flaw? Does the fact that he's almost killed two people with his bare hands and can be rough with his suspects make him a bad person?

PLACE, WORK & LEADERSHIP

- Is the setting of this book one of the characters? If so, what is Silas's relationship to that character?
- Many things Silas learned and experienced as a rancher complicate and undermine his work as a cop. Do any of those experiences help? Which ones and how?
- Silas turned Kevin Clark around. Did he do it with learned experience as a manager, or was it an instinctual gut level read of the situation and what to do?
- Is Silas a mentor to his department? What are some examples?

JUSTICE & CHOICES

- Once Silas had Tony Faria for negligent operation of a vehicle, why did he risk his neck and career to press ahead and try for a bigger case against him?
- Would you have taken the shot at Tony Faria's shoulder while he was holding a migrant? What does it say about Silas that he didn't hesitate?
- Silas saved the one truckload of migrants but potentially risked the whole federal investigation. Would you make the same choice?

Book Club Questions Continued

RELATIONSHIPS, TONE & STORY

- What does Wren get out of this relationship? After 30 years without settling down, why take on this emotionally stunted man?
- It's been observed that Wren and Silas "are each other's exception." What does that mean?
- At the surface, the Wren and Silas dynamic looks like the usual opposites attract trope. But they are actually cut from the same cloth in the ways that matter. Silas grew up without status but with grit and integrity. Wren grew up drowning in status and spent her whole life refusing it. They've arrived at the same place from completely opposite directions—both essentially self-made, both defined by what they chose rather than what they inherited, both people who measure worth by goodness rather than pedigree. Is that enough to build a relationship on?
- Since the book is told from Silas's perspective, and he is a man of few words, what mechanisms does the author employ to get the story out there?
- Light, daylight, lighthouses is a big motif in the book. Why? How do Wren and Silas think about and use light differently?

CLOSING QUESTION

- Book two is already written. Where do you think Silas and Wren's story goes from here?

IF YOUR GROUP WANTS TO GO DEEPER

One reviewer of *The Washashore* said "the book presents Silas as a man who is asking himself what it means to lead a town. We are also reminded that violence is not always mythic or grandiose, but often rather mundane, as political theorist and philosopher Hannah Arendt pointed out. It sort of reminds us that community building is about hard work, professional ethics over heroics, and a reminder that community is built, not inherited. These are some excellent lessons for a society that seems to have forgotten many of these time-honored truths. *The Washashore* shatters the illusion of small-town security, and it happens to be doing so while our own society is breaking apart all by itself." Does this book speak to people who have lost faith in the system and need to know that community and justice are still defensible ideals and attainable goals? Does the book restore your faith in community and decency? Do ordinary heroes like Silas still exist?

Ranch Water

Serves 4

Southwestern-Inspired Book Club Beverage.

Book club batch version—three ingredients. No sweetness, no excuses.



INGREDIENTS

- 8 oz tequila blanco
- Juice of 4 limes
- 2 bottles Topo Chico (or any sparkling mineral water)
- Ice
- Optional: pinch of salt or salted rim

METHOD

1. Fill a pitcher with ice
2. Add tequila + lime juice
3. Top with sparkling water
4. Stir gently
5. Serve in tall glasses with lime wedges

Wren Bradford's Southwestern Style Three-Bean Chili

Serves 6-8 • Time: ~1 hour

With lentils, tofu, fire-roasted vegetables, and a few quiet surprises.



INGREDIENTS

Base

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 large onion, diced
- 4 cloves garlic, minced

Protein & Body

- 1 lb ground beef (optional)
- 1 cup dried lentils (rinsed)
- 1 block (14 oz) extra-firm tofu, pressed & cubed

Beans (3 kinds)

- 1 can black beans, drained
- 1 can kidney beans, drained
- 1 can pinto beans, drained

Liquids & Vegetables

- 4 cups bone broth (*or vegetable broth*)
- 1 can (14 oz) fire-roasted tomatoes
- 2 fresh tomatoes
- 2–3 green chiles (Anaheim or poblano)

Flavor Builders

- 2 tbsp chili powder (*strong blend*)
- 1 tsp cumin
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- 1 tbsp unsweetened cocoa powder
- 2 tbsp almond butter

Finish

- Salt & pepper
- Optional: squeeze of lime or splash of vinegar

METHOD

1. **Fire-roast the vegetables.** Hold tomatoes and chiles directly over a flame until blistered and charred. Cover briefly, peel, and chop.
2. **Build the base.** Heat oil in a large pot. Cook onion with a pinch of salt until soft. Add garlic; cook 1 minute.
3. **Brown the meat (optional).** Add ground beef and cook until browned, breaking it up as it cooks.
4. **Bloom the spices.** Stir in chili powder, cumin, paprika, cinnamon, and cocoa. Cook 1–2 minutes until fragrant.
5. **Simmer.** Add canned tomatoes, roasted vegetables, lentils, and broth. Simmer 25–30 minutes, until lentils are tender.
6. **Finish the chili.** Add beans and tofu; simmer 10–15 minutes more. Stir in almond butter until fully incorporated. Season to taste.

NOTES

- Lentils naturally thicken the chili as it cooks
- Cocoa and cinnamon add depth, not sweetness
- Almond butter gives body and richness
- Tofu absorbs flavor and softens into the background

Wren & Silas' Carne Adovada (New Mexican Red Chile Pork)

Serves 6 • Time: 2.5-3 hours

Slow-cooked pork in a deep red chile sauce.



INGREDIENTS

- 2½–3 lbs pork shoulder, cut into 1½” cubes
- 2 tbsp neutral oil or lard

Red Chile Sauce

- 6–8 dried New Mexican red chiles (or 3 tbsp red chile powder)
- 3 cloves garlic
- 1 tsp dried Mexican oregano
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1–2 tbsp apple cider vinegar
- 2 cups warm water or light broth
- Salt to taste

METHOD

1. **Make the red chile sauce.** If using dried chiles: toast lightly, remove stems and seeds, then soak in hot water 15–20 minutes. Blend with garlic, oregano, cumin, vinegar, and soaking liquid until smooth. Strain if needed.
2. **Brown the pork.** Heat oil in a heavy pot. Brown pork in batches; don't crowd the pan.
3. **Build the dish.** Return all pork to the pot. Pour in chile sauce. Season with salt.
4. **Slow cook.** Cover and simmer gently (or bake at 325°F) for 2–2½ hours, until tender and deeply infused.
5. **Finish.** Uncover for the last 20–30 minutes to thicken slightly. Adjust salt and vinegar to taste.

NOTES

- This dish is about the chile—earthy, not overly spicy.
- Vinegar brightens the richness without announcing itself.
- Best served with warm tortillas (no silverware required, just the way Silas prefers).

Traditional Calabacitas (Zucchini, Corn & Green Chile)

Serves 4-6 • Time: ~25 min

Simple, bright, and quietly rich.



INGREDIENTS

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 2-3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2-3 zucchini, chopped (ideally small and young, in which case use 4-5)
- 1 cup corn (fresh or frozen, without sauce)
- 1-2 green chiles, roasted, peeled & chopped
- ½ tsp dried oregano
- Salt & pepper

Optional Finish (Wren's Touch)

- 2-3 tbsp plain yogurt or a small handful of grated queso fresco cheese

METHOD

1. **Start the base.** Heat oil. Cook onion with a pinch of salt until soft. Add garlic; cook briefly.
2. **Cook the vegetables.** Add zucchini; cook until just beginning to soften. Add corn and green chiles.
3. **Season & finish.** Add oregano, salt, and pepper. Cook until tender but not mushy.
4. **Optional finish.** Stir in a spoonful of yogurt for creaminess, or top lightly with cheese.

NOTES

- Keep the texture lively—this dish should not be overcooked.
- Green chiles provide warmth, not heat.
- Simple ingredients, handled carefully.