

## Real Life and Liars: Reading Group Questions

1. Does Mira's reluctance to have surgery for her breast cancer seem understandable?
2. What other reasons might she have for this reluctance beyond what she shares directly with the reader in the opening chapter?
3. Which significant life changes are facing Mira, and how might those changes be affecting her state of mind regarding the cancer diagnosis?
4. How would you describe the relationship of Mira to each of her children? How do these relationships affect the plot of the novel?
5. How do you react to Mira's marijuana use? How much does it affect her decision-making throughout the book?
6. How would you describe the marriage of Mira and Max? How do you think their relationship plays into her reaction to her cancer diagnosis?
7. How does birth order affect the three grown siblings and how they fit into the family?
8. Which main character—Mira, Katya, Ivan, or Irina—do you understand the most? What parallels can you draw to your own life?
9. Mira observes in the book that children grow up any way they want to, despite a parent's best efforts. Do you agree with this?
10. Why does Katya find herself driving by her old boyfriend's house and secretly calling him? Have you ever felt drawn to a romance from your past?
11. What is the source of the friction between Mira and Katya, and does it seem justified to you? Do you have old childhood fights with your parents that still echo in your adulthood?
12. Do you think Katya and Charles's marriage will endure? Do you think Katya will truly change her life? If so, in what ways?
13. Do you agree with Katya's decision to stay with Charles? How else might she have reacted?
14. Why is Ivan so clueless about romance?
15. Do you think Jenny and Ivan have a future together? Why or why not?
16. Why do you think Irina engages in reckless romantic behavior?
17. What do you think Irina should do about Darius and the baby?
18. Do you believe Mira will change her mind about the surgery when she sees the doctor again? Why or why not?
19. What role does the Big Tree play in the novel?
20. How does Mira's lack of formal religion play into the story? Do you believe her view has changed by the end?

21. Do you think the Zielinskis are a happy family at the beginning?  
How about at the end of the novel?