Discussion Questions for Girl, Interrupted (1999)

127 minutes (2 hours, 7 minutes), R-rating for strong language and content relating to drugs, sexuality, and suicide

Summary: Winona Ryder plays Susanna, a young woman with borderline personality disorder, who is sent to a psychiatric hospital after a suicide attempt in the late 1960s. She befriends Lisa (Angelia Jolie), who carries a diagnosis of sociopathy (antisocial personality disorder). Initially, Susanna is in denial about her mental condition and is not open to treatment. However, she reaches a turning point after a tragedy.

1. At the beginning of the film, a doctor told Susanna that she is hurting everyone around her. How does a person's mental illness or substance use disorder hurt those closest to them?

2. What is your understanding of borderline personality disorder? Does the movie accurately portray it? Why or why not?

3. Is it helpful or harmful for someone to know their mental health diagnosis? Why?

4. How did Susanna and Lisa's friendship negatively impact Susanna's treatment?

5. The head nurse tells Susanna that she needs to talk about her pain. How does talking help a person to heal?