

Discussion questions for **NECESSARY PEOPLE** by Anna Pitoniak

1. When Violet describes what it was like to befriend Stella, she says: “It wasn’t that my personality changed when I met Stella. It was that it *became*.” What do you think she means by this?
2. From a young age, Violet is certain that she wants to work in TV news. Why do you think this career appeals to her so much? What makes her fall in love with it?
3. There’s a constantly shifting power balance between Violet and Stella over the course of the story. Which are the key moments when power changes hands? Were you always aware that it was happening, at the time? Were Violet and Stella aware of it?
4. Did you find yourself identifying with Violet, Stella, or the other characters in the novel? Did your sense of identification or sympathy change, as the story unfolded?
5. Eliza and Rebecca, in their own ways, serve as role models for Violet as she climbs the career ladder. What do you think she admires in each of them? What does she have in common with these women? Where does she diverge from them?
6. More than just being Stella’s friend, Violet eventually becomes a part of the Bradley family. What did you make of this dynamic? How does the Bradley family help Violet pursue her dreams? How do they hinder her?
7. As things deteriorate, Violet reflects on her inability to end it with Stella: “The difference between me and Jamie? Jamie was brave enough to say it to her face. To cut bait, to make a clean break.” But a romantic relationship is different from a friendship. Is it harder to break up with a platonic friend than with a boyfriend or girlfriend?
8. Imagine that Violet didn’t become best friends with Stella. How different might her life have been? Do you think that friendship ultimately determined her trajectory—or might she have made some of the same choices, even without Stella?

