



# Virgil Wander



## About the Author:

Leif Enger was born in 1961 in Sauk Centre, MN to Don and Wilma Enger, a band leader and a teacher, respectively, at Osakis High School. A graduate of Moorhead State University, Enger worked as reporter and producer for the Minnesota Public Radio program Mainstreet Radio for sixteen years before the success of *Peace Like a River*. Writing with his brother Lin under the pen name L.L. Enger, Enger co-wrote five mystery novels about a retired baseball player named Gun Pederson for Pocket and Simon & Schuster in the early 1990s.

Enger and his wife Robin Read live on a 56-acre tract that includes farmland and forest near Aitkin, MN and have two sons.

## Inside the kit:

- (8) copies of the book
- (1) book club guide

## About the Book:

(from the publisher's website)

Midwestern movie house owner Virgil Wander is “cruising along at medium altitude” when his car flies off the road into icy Lake Superior. Virgil survives but his language and memory are altered and he emerges into a world no longer familiar to him. Awakening in this new life, Virgil begins to piece together his personal history and the lore of his broken town, with the help of a cast of affable and curious locals—from Rune, a twinkling, pipe-smoking, kite-flying stranger investigating the mystery of his disappeared son; to Nadine, the reserved, enchanting wife of the vanished man; to Tom, a journalist and Virgil’s oldest friend; and various members of the Pea family who must confront tragedies of their own. Into this community returns a shimmering prodigal son who may hold the key to reviving their town.

## Suggested Reads:

*The Art of Fielding* by Chad Harbach

*Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine* by Gail Honeyman

*The Keeper of Lost Things* by Ruth Hogan



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1. Virgil's spectacular sail off the road into Lake Superior is the inciting force of this novel. How does the catastrophe structure the novel, for Virgil and the townspeople.
2. Virgil muses often about the kindness or cruelty of women. Who are the women he contemplates or fantasizes about and how do they respond to him—as friends, mother figures, lovers?
3. What are the odds stacked against the people of Greenstone? Some would say this is a complicated, even disenchanted time in America. How does the book affirm or dispute this view of the country?
4. Greenstone feels like any American town that has been passed over or forgotten. Why are so many novelists and playwrights fascinated by small-town America? What ideas do they allow us to explore? What other novels, plays, or films explore similar themes?
5. Enger has a flair for eccentric characters. What makes them memorable? How are they quintessentially human, for good or ill?
6. What is the symbolism of the kites and their effect on the fliers? Why is kite-flying so addictive to some characters?
7. How does the loss of Rune's son reverberate through the novel? How is represented and mythologized throughout the novel?
8. Discuss the cache of old films and the way gatherings and friendships grow around them. What do they mean to Virgil? How culpable was he in keeping them? Why does he finally return the contraband and what ensues?
9. What does Adam Leer represent in the novel and how is this demonstrated to the reader? Is Leer an archetypal character of motiveless malignity like Iago from Othello, or something more complex?
10. How do Virgil and Rune change as they recover from their respective injuries? How do other characters help in their recoveries, and how do their chosen activities help them regain their footing?