A BOOK CLUB DISCUSSION GUIDE

Close Family

A novel · A.R. Hollowell

ABOUT THE BOOK

Taylor Anne Clarke counsels people whose DNA tests break their families open. When a DNA drive could solve the murders of six women around Harlan Ferry, Ohio, her father begs her not to take part. In front of two hundred neighbors, she uploads her own DNA anyway, and her family runs every stage she has ever warned her clients about.

THEMES TO TALK ABOUT

Truth versus loyalty · What families keep buried · The cost of doing right

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

01 Taylor Anne knows exactly how families react to DNA surprises. Why doesn't that knowledge protect her?

02 Her father begs, If you ever loved me. What does he really ask her to choose?

03 Would you turn in your own father? Did your answer change while reading?

04 The grandmother crosses Taylor Anne's name out of the family Bible at Easter. Which act of family punishment shocked you most?

05 Her sister says on the news, My sister did this. Who is to blame for what follows?

06 How does a small town make secrets both harder and easier to keep?

07 Alaurah-Lee is twelve. How does protecting her shape every choice Taylor Anne makes?

08 The book makes you think you have it figured out, then turns. Which twist got you?

09 How do consumer DNA tests change what privacy means for a whole family?

10 Did you agree with Taylor Anne's choices, even when you rooted for her?

11 What does the title Close Family mean by the end?

12 Is there a choice in the novel with no right answer?

IDEAS FOR YOUR MEETING

- Ask whether anyone in the group has taken a DNA test, and whether they would upload it to a database that police can search.