

READING GROUP GUIDE FOR *HIDDEN*

I am open to attending/calling in to book clubs. Please send all inquiries to catherinemckenzieauthor@gmail.com and put "BOOK CLUB" in the subject-line.

For now, here are a few questions to get you started!

1. Claire and Seth must cope with Jeff's sudden disappearance from their lives, and are obviously in shock at the news of his death. Do you think it is more difficult to cope with a loved one's death if it's sudden than if you have had the chance to prepare yourself for their passing, as in the case of a prolonged illness?
2. Although Jeff is one of the narrators of the novel, he cannot answer any of the questions Claire is left with after he passes. How do you cope with un-reconciled questions about someone you love after they are gone? Do you think Claire finds any amount of peace after visiting Tish?
3. Claire's family takes an active role during her bereavement— her parents, her in-laws, her sister and even her brother-in-law surround and support her— while Tish must face the true extent of her grief alone. Have you ever had to hide the extent of your feelings from the closest people around you? Did you end up confiding in someone?
4. Is Jeff's pre-funeral a grim foreshadowing of his future, or just a cruelly ironic coincidence? Do you agree with Claire that "if you [are] prepared for the worst, you might make it come true"?
5. Throughout the novel, it appears that Jeff and Tish's affair beings as an emotional attachment rather than anything physical. Is having an emotional affair as damaging to a relationship as a physical one? Is it possible to be in love with more than one person?
6. Jeff and Tish agreed to put a deadline on their relationship, after which they would no longer contact one another for the sake of their respective families. Have you ever had to end a relationship that you really wanted to continue?
7. In the end, Tish holds true to her pact with Jeff to keep what happened between them a secret. Do you think it is selfish of her not to tell grieving Claire the truth? Do you think it is better for Claire not to know?
8. Do you think Claire is justified in going through Jeff's emails once she becomes suspicious of his relationship with Tish? Would you feel comfortable if someone close to you had access to your cell phone or computer?
9. Do you think Claire's past relationship with her husband's brother provides Jeff

with some amount of justification for his affair with Tish, or contribute to its development? Do you think Jeff is truly reconciled to the idea of Tim and Claire's relationship?

10. Tish and her daughter Zoey are both intellectually gifted individuals, and also end up sharing anxiety about performing in front of an unseen audience. Does this factor in to larger issues in the novel surrounding the idea of being observed and judged by others? How important are other people's opinions of you, and of your relationships?