

READING GROUP QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever lost a friend or a child in a crowded place? How did you feel?
2. Rachel has been through a very difficult year, having to face her own mortality and endure months of treatment and uncertainty. Part of her wants to hold on tight to her family, and another part wants to live life more dangerously. In this context, is her affair with Nico understandable or even forgivable?
3. If you found yourself in the same position as Rachel, would you feel the need to change anything about your life?
4. The schoolyard fight between Emmet and Fitz is a pivotal moment in the book. Discuss the derogatory language used by young men when referring to girls and how Emmet could have handled the situation differently. Discuss the dynamics of male friendships, and how banter can sometimes become belittling and toxic over time.
5. Both Bridie and Emmet are lonely, and their loneliness makes them vulnerable to bad decisions and influences. Discuss teenage loneliness, how it can manifest and what can be done to mitigate it.
6. The perpetrator states that trust, love and money are essential to keeping a family together. Do you agree?
7. As the novel progresses, the family casts suspicion on everyone in their circle. Can any of us ever be fully aware of the criminality hidden in our community? What can we do to increase our awareness and safety?
8. Sean is a constant drain on Rory, both financially and emotionally. Discuss the burden of addiction on family members and how (or if) boundaries can be established.
9. Trauma can bring a family together or push them apart. In this novel trauma has arguably had both effects. Discuss.
10. All the family members have changed by the end of the novel, but arguably Rory has changed more than anyone. Discuss