1. How does the beginning of the novel set the tone for the rest of the story?

2. In the novel, the narrative alternates between multiple timelines and perspectives. How did this affect your reading experience? Do you think this structure worked well within the novel?

3. We know that Molly blames herself for her daughter, Annie’s, death. What did you think happened to Annie when this was first mentioned? Were you surprised when it was revealed? How did knowing or not knowing the true story affect your opinion of Molly’s character?

4. In chapter four Nic is reflecting upon her feelings toward her mother. “Molly Clarke’s voice and face and smell could provoke feelings that were at war inside her. Agony and bliss. Rage and love . . . It was painful to be with her.” In addition, there is also a passage in chapter 6 that says, “Maybe Nic wasn’t her mother. But they were bound together by their actions that day, the bow and stern of a sinking ship.” Discuss the mother/daughter dynamic between Nic and Molly and what we know about their relationship. What other mother/daughter relationships are there in the novel, and how do they shape the narrative?

5. What do you make of the fact that Nic is the only member of Molly’s family who really tries to find out what happened to her? How does this speak to their relationship and the dynamics of their family overall?

6. In chapter 7 Alice says, “We were waiting for you. We had to wait a long time.” At this point in the novel, what did you begin to suspect was happening to Molly? Were there any other parts of the novel that felt revealing to you?

7. Nic talks about how Molly had been “the definition of home, the embodiment of family.” She reflects on how their family had been perfect, and how the death of Annie felt like a punishment. What did you make of this passage and what it says about the Clarke family?

8. Alice’s character is very complex and dynamic for such a young child. What role does her character play in Molly’s life and in the novel overall?

9. In chapter 22 Officer Reyes says, “Every coin has two sides, right?” Nic then thinks about the two sides of her father and others in her life. Discuss the various characters in the novel that have two very different sides. Which character stands out the most to you?

10. How did you feel about the ending of the novel? What was your reaction? Did you anticipate how the story would end?