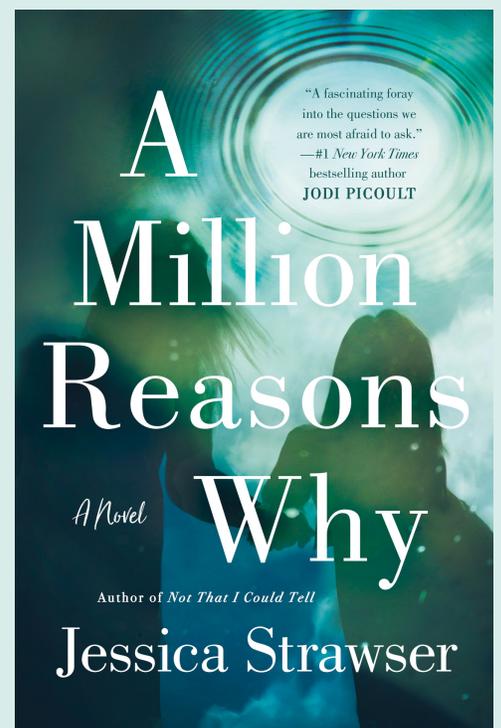


A Million Reasons Why

Discussion Guide

1. Do you think Sela took the right approach in reaching out to her sister for a relationship? Should she have been more upfront about her circumstances to start, or perhaps declined to reach out at all? What influence did Doug and Leigh have (or fail to have) on the way she handled things?
2. How does the marriage of Sela and Doug compare with that of Caroline and Walt? Do you think, if Caroline and Walt had gone through similar struggles, they would have stayed together?
3. Explore the theme of mothers in this novel. Both Rebecca and Hannah have made grave mistakes in the past, but also sacrifices for what they felt was right. In what ways do Sela and Caroline need to decide whether a mother's love triumphs over past faults? How do their mothers (and father) influence their own attitudes toward parenthood?
4. Rebecca and Hannah had a surrogate sisterhood that ultimately failed. What bearing does that ultimately have on the literal sisterhood bond between their daughters?
5. Walt and Caroline have a unique arrangement for their marriage. Does what they've done make sense to you? Do you think that, perhaps, they might have been in love all along?
6. Sela wants more children and cannot have them, while Leigh has another baby coming even though she wasn't prepared to be a mother again. How are they able to be there for each other, despite coming from two very different places in life? How is what's happened a barrier between them?
7. When Sela tells herself—and others—that she has changed her mind about asking for or accepting help, do you believe her?



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8. Do you think Caroline was wrong in seeking out medical information about donation in spite of her family's objections—and without involving them? Did you see her as driven by guilt, a desire to be a hero, or something else?

9. In granting Hannah's request not to acknowledge Sela, is Fred taking the easy way out? Is he being cowardly, or honestly trying to do what's best? How does his reaction complicate things for Caroline, and how does it simplify things for Sela?

10. Dr. Kay Adams plays a small but essential role in Caroline's thought process about altruism and organ donation—and, ultimately, in Sela's, too. Did she challenge your own beliefs as well? Did the negative aspects of Dr. Kay's experience surprise you?

11. Discuss Sela and Brody. Do you believe how she chose to see the world was a helpful way to cope? Did it do more harm than good?

12. How did your feelings toward Doug change as Sela's story unfolded?

13. At the start of the book, how did you see the end resolving? Did that expectation or prediction change as the book went on?

14. Fast forward five years from now. Caroline's extended family and Sela were very much at odds in the beginning. How does the last scene set the stage going forward? How do you think their relationships change as time goes on?

