

WHAT THE NEIGHBORS SAW

Discussion Questions

1. The book opens with the real estate listing for 51 Shadow Road. How does the listing reflect the aspirations and fears Alexis Crawford has for her family? To what extent does the Crawfords' experience with real estate highlight the challenges of home ownership in the United States?
2. Are all the residents of River Forest socially privileged? Does living in the same neighborhood tend to align people's views, even if they have different backgrounds?
3. How would you describe Alexis' new neighbors' reactions to her and her reaction to them? To what extent do their interactions (for example, when a couple brings Alexis a houseplant or when Laura asks about where Alexis grew up) reflect their own race, class, and generational background?
4. Alexis' mother Raisa lost her family in a catastrophic hurricane and struggled as a Black immigrant in a new country. She kept many secrets from her daughter. In what ways do Alexis' thinking and behavior reflect this history of family trauma, despite her material success?
5. Blair Bard justifies her actions as necessary to protect her children, and—to a certain extent—Alexis agrees with her. Do you see any justification for what Blair did?
6. Blair and Alexis are quite dissimilar in ways that are easily observed, such as socioeconomic background, ethnicity, and age. But what are some of the life experiences, personal characteristics, and values that they do share?
7. How does social privilege based on race, gender, and class affect how the perpetrators and the victims of crimes are treated throughout the book? For example, the sex workers and Mack, the little girl in Alexis' apartment block and her unknown murderer, or Teddy and his murderers.
8. For both Alexis and Blair, relatively new consumer DNA tests unearth old family secrets. Do you think these tests and other new technologies are definitively a good thing, or are there some secrets that should be left buried?



MINOTAUR BOOKS