

A Secret Kept by Tatiana de Rosnay

Book club questions

- 1) Discuss the different narrative structures employed in A Secret Kept. What do you think the author intended to achieve with each? Do you prefer one over the others?
- 2) How does the author describe the classic, wealthy 16th arrondissement of Paris-where Blanche Rey's apartment and the avenue Kleber one are located-as opposed to where Antoine lives, on the Left bank? What does this tell you about the Rey family?
- 3) Part of the novel takes place on Noirmoutier Island which is connected to the west coast of France by the Gois Passage. Why is Antoine so attached to Gois Passage? Do you see any parallels between the author's descriptions of this place and the story as a whole?
- 4) What was your impression of Antoine at the beginning of the book? What about at the end? Over the course of the novel, how does he change and what does he learn about himself?
- 5) Discuss the different themes and imagery of death that come up in the novel and that Antoine has to face. Did you find them morbid? Or realistic?
- 6) Did you like the character of the sexy, streewise mortician Angèle Rouvatier? What makes her different from other heroines and what do you think she represents? In what ways does she have a hand in the changes in Antoine's character?
- 7) François and Antoine Rey are two opposite personalities, as fathers, husbands, brothers, and sons. Discuss specific differences you see. Do you believe Antoine will ever get through to his father? What exactly do you think François knows about Clarisse, her life, her death?
- 8) Clarisse Rey is the invisible woman of this book. Yet her letters, photos, and the film that Antoine watches at the end, as well as Gaspard's confession, gradually expose her. What kind of woman was she? What do we learn about her? Compare her to Angèle, Melanie, and Astrid.
- 9) How do Melanie and Antoine react differently when they discover the truth about their mother and her death? Why do you think that Melanie chooses not to remember? Do you think you would react more like Melanie or Antoine?
- 10) This novel explores taboo subjects and family secrets in a conservative French bourgeois society. Discuss those subjects and whether they would be taboo if the novel were set in the USA. What do you think really happened the day Clarisse went to confront Blanche?

11) Do you personally believe that family secrets should be revealed or hidden forever? In cases like the novel's, do you think the truth is more painful than lying?

12) If you have read Sarah's Key-also by de Rosnay-can you point to any themes that are found in both books?