



1. How does the structure of the novel, with chapters alternating between present day and flashbacks, affect your experience as a reader? How would it have been different had the story been told in a strictly linear fashion?
2. What did you think of Graham's "pretend therapy"? Did you think there was any validity to it or were you skeptical?
3. On page 60, Molly observes that, "Daddy once told me Aunt Claudia had been the peacemaker in his family when they were growing up and that it took a toll on her. Ever since then I'd noticed that she walked a fine line between everybody's wants and needs. It made my stomach hurt to think about having to do that." Molly's awareness of the role that her aunt played in the family made a large impact on her. Where in the story do we see Molly being sensitive to and concerned about the balance of other people's wants and needs, both as a teenager and as she grows older into adulthood?
4. Molly's father once told her that, "if you don't forgive someone, it's like trying to dance with a lead weight on your shoulders" (page 326). What did he mean by this? How do we see this with Molly? Can you relate Graham's statement to a situation from your own life? How did forgiveness affect you?
5. Through the flashbacks we watch as Molly gradually pulls away from her family, up to the event that leads her to pull away completely. What are key moments—both large and small—where we see Molly beginning to feel distant from different members of her family? Which of these moments are more typical of adolescence and the process of growing up, and which are more unique to their family situation and the familial events that unfold?
6. When Molly and Aidan attend the group meeting where they are introduced to a family that has an open adoption Molly is stunned and, ultimately, scared by it. Did her reaction make sense to you? How do you imagine you would react if you had been in her position? How would you feel?

## *Discussion Questions*



7. As you were reading, what did you think was going to happen with Molly and Aidan and the adoption process? Did your predictions change as you continued reading? Were you surprised by the ending?
8. Through the flashbacks we watch as Molly discovers the many different decisions that the adults in her life made: Amalia's decision to not tell Graham that she was pregnant with his child; Amalia's decision to let Graham and Nora raise Molly; the decision to have Amalia live at Morrison Ridge and clean the families' homes; and the decision to wait to tell Molly the details of their situation and how they all came to Morrison Ridge until she specifically asked. How did you react to each of these revelations? Do you think they made the right decisions along the way? If not, what do you think they should have done differently, and did your opinion change as the story progressed?
9. Why did Molly become a lawyer? What leads her to decide to change careers and go to graduate school? Reflecting on your own life, how are some of the decisions you've made as an adult influenced by your childhood and the observations you made of the adults who were in your life at that time?
10. Were you satisfied with the way the novel ended? Imagine how this story would unfold beyond the ending of the novel. What do you think the future holds for Molly and Aidan? For Sienna? For Natalie? For Nora and Morrison Ridge?