

MORE THAN FRIENDS

Reading Group Discussion Guide

1. When Grady contacted Teke after many years of estrangement, were his motives benevolent or selfish? Given what Grady did to help her escape from her father, does Teke have an obligation to him?
2. Have you ever thought about contacting an old flame? What do you think would happen if you did?
3. Why do people like Virginia Clinger thrive on spreading gossip? Is she more justified in spreading the word about Teke and Sam because her story is true?
4. If Michael, the sole witness, had died at the scene of the accident, do you think Teke would have confessed her infidelity to the rest of her family anyway? Would Sam have confessed?
5. Despite a history of multiple infidelities on his part and his father's part, J.D. comes down hard on Teke, calling her a whore, threatening divorce, and moving out. Why does he react so strongly to her one act of indiscretion? Who is he really angry at? Who is he really punishing?
6. J.D. tells Teke she's a lousy wife and a lousy mother. When she replies, "I've always done everything right until now," he responds, "None of the rest counts now." Should one act of transgression nullify the past and doom the transgressor?
7. Why did Teke spend all of her time in the hospital with Michael while Jana, Leigh and J.D. fended for themselves at home? Was she right to do that? What would you have done?
8. J.D. married Teke precisely because he knew his father would disapprove. Why do some of us try to do exactly what our parents want, while others try to do the opposite? Should parents try to raise children who don't rebel? If so, how would they do that?
9. If a convicted murderer moved into your neighborhood, how would you feel? Were you confident throughout the story that Grady would never kill again? Or did you think that Grady might actually kill J.D. during their conflict in the woods? Is one kind of murder - for the sake of protecting someone, for instance - more acceptable than another kind?
10. By the end of the book, each of the four main adult characters has gone through a transformation. Discuss how each character evolves throughout the story. If Sam and Teke hadn't inadvertently created a catalyst with their spur of the moment liaison, would the Popewells have stayed just the way they were in the beginning of the book?