

THE SUMMER I DARED

READING GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDES

1. In *The Summer I Dared* three people emerge physically unscathed from an accident that takes the lives of nine others. In what ways do the reactions of these three people differ? Discuss the emotions involved. How do those emotions differ and why?
2. What is the central theme of this book? How does the book weigh in on the issue of marital infidelity?
3. Why did Julia put up with Monte? Was she right in staying with him? Was she right in rethinking her marriage after the accident?
4. Consider Janet's early betrayal by George. How did this impact Julia? Is family history destined to repeat itself?
5. Does the excitement of marriage inevitably fade over time? Might Julia have done anything different to avoid it? Discuss some of the major challenges to a marriage and possible ways to cope.
6. Was Julia right in allowing herself to befriend Noah? How has the concept of heterosexual friendship changed from Julia's generation to her daughter Molly's generation?
7. In what ways is Zoe a role model for Julia? Has Julia's mother, Janet, also been a role model for her? Who is the role model for Julia's daughter, Molly? Discuss the impact of role models in our lives.
8. *The Summer I Dared* tells of Julia's search for self. Outline this search.
9. What is the message in Julia's connection with the Walsh girls? Does this connection play a role in the choices she makes?
10. Noah is a not big talker. Was it lack of communication that destroyed his marriage? During the course of the story, does his skill at this change?
11. Is violence justified in a lobster war? Should we think less of Noah for his part in that war?
12. Discuss the lessons we teach our children by example. Consider Noah's involving Ian in the lobster war. Consider Julia's involvement with Noah while still being married to Monte. How do these things impact the children involved?