

Book Club Discussion Guide: Family Charms

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Overview

Marlo, Taryn, and Amelia are three sisters united by a shared history of abandonment. When their mother, Elizabeth, resurfaces after twenty years and invites them on a global journey to see the life she built without them, the sisters must confront their past, their father's secrets, and the true meaning of family.

Discussion Questions

1. **The Journey:** Do you think the trip was more about finding their mother or a journey of self-discovery for each sister?
2. **Sympathy:** Which sister do you think is most sympathetic toward Elizabeth's decision to leave? Which is the least?
3. **The Father's Role:** Is their father a protector or a villain for keeping the truth from them for two decades? How did his role impact their later relationships with men?
4. **Patterns of Abandonment:** Do you think Marlo's mother leaving made it easier for her to justify leaving her own husband? Is abandonment "hereditary" in this story?
5. **Symbolism:** What do Taryn's tattoos say about her? How do they act as "charms" or protection in her life story?
6. **Safeguards:** Does Amelia purposely choose unavailable people as a safeguard against getting hurt?
7. **Healing:** Identify the specific "a-ha" moments where the sisters' relationship began to heal. Was the healing organic or forced by the circumstances of the trip?
8. **Elizabeth's Motivations:** Did Elizabeth seek out caretaker roles in her life abroad to punish herself for leaving her daughters, or to make amends in the only way she knew how?
9. **The Definition of Family:** Based on the ending of the book, what does being a "family" really mean? Is it blood, shared history, or forgiveness?
10. **The Setting:** How did the various global locations reflect the internal emotional state of the characters at that point in the book?