



# ALL THE DIRTY SECRETS READING GROUP GUIDE

## Questions and Topics for Discussion

1. So much of *All the Dirty Secrets* is about the lasting effects of high school. What is it about adolescence that impacts who we are the rest of our lives? Liza and Zoe's relationship has a major shift over the course of the book. How did adolescence affect your relationship with your parents?
2. Intrigue and misdeeds at elite private schools is a mystery-genre unto itself. What do you find most interesting about the lives and politics of students of upper-class families? Why is this such a delicious world to read dark stories about? How do these privileged communities protect themselves?
3. As the PR person for the school, an alum, and a parent of a student, Liza finds herself in a unique position. If she exposes the secrets of the school community, she could lose everything. Does she make the right decision? What choice would you make if you were in a similar position?
4. Liza learns dark truths about friends she's had for most of her life. Have you had major perception shifts with people you've known for years? Looking back, were you able to recognize any signs of what you would learn? How did your friendship change after those revelations?
5. Authority figures play a huge role in cover-ups in both timelines. What role does privilege play in having institutions like the police and school administration on your side? What do those institutions have to gain from protecting privileged classes?



Before turning to fiction, **AGGIE BLUM THOMPSON** covered real-life crime as a newspaper reporter for a number of papers, including *The Boston Globe* and *The Washington Post*. She lives with her husband and two children, a cat, and a dog in the suburbs of Washington D.C. She is the author of *I Don't Forgive You* and *All the Dirty Secrets*.

6. Shelby claims: “When I love someone, I don’t give up on them. No matter how flawed they are.” (pg. 232). How has this philosophy affected the choices she’s made? How does that compare to Liza who has demonstrated more willingness to move on?
7. Both Nikki and Emery are outsiders in their high school social groups. How does this affect their respective fates? How might their stories have changed if they weren’t considered outcasts?
8. At the heart of this book are twisty murder mysteries – one in the present day and one lingering from 1994. Did you see each of the outcomes coming or were you surprised at the revelations?
9. The book shifts perspectives between present day Liza, Zoe, and a third-person narrator in 1994. How does this affect the overall storytelling? Did this framework make the book more suspenseful?
10. In the end, Liza notes “Archer and Todd are rapists. But as they move into their new communities, and on with their new lives, they will bear no scarlet letter to identify them as such.” (pg. 250). How does the legacy of sexual assault affect the perpetrator? Can there be any justice for a victim of sexual assault in a society that can be so forgiving of sexual offenders?

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