

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The novel takes place in the “good old days,” but were they? How different was *then* from *now*? What’s changed and what remains the same?
2. We continue to grapple with some of the problems Frankie, Viv, and Biz contend with in the story—racism, stigmatization of mental illness, an unwillingness to accept people whose sexual preferences are different than our own, and predators. Do you think society has made any progress in these areas over the years? If so, how? If not, why not?
3. The girls’ hideout is an important element in the story. What part does it play?
4. Over the course of the novel, Biz wrestles with feeling unloved by her father. Do you think she comes to terms with that by the conclusion?
5. Frankie, Viv, and Biz are very different in personality and temperament. Why do you think they were drawn to one another as children and remain deeply bonded? Do you have any lifelong friends that you would trust with your life?
6. Share some of your childhood experiences and discuss how they continue to impact you.
7. Loss is one of the main themes of the book. Share a loss you’ve suffered and how it’s affected you. Has time healed your wounds?

8. The story is set in a small Wisconsin town that appears idyllic at the onset, but the girls' unearth secrets that change all that. How do you think Summit was different after the murder?

9. Biz believes that the delineation between the past and the present is more like a cobweb than a brick wall. That one can never really let bygones be bygones because what once was . . . still is. What do you think?

10. Have you, or anyone you love, had to deal with mental illness?