

BIG LIES IN A SMALL TOWN discussion questions

- 1) How does the prologue introduce us to the novel? What does it leave you wondering about? Did it succeed in making you want to read further?
- 2) The novel alternates between two timeframes and voices - did you feel drawn to the past or the present narrative and characters more?
- 3) Both women suffered terrible and unfair hardship in their lives, can you relate to how they react to it and the choices they make?
- 4) In the present day narrative, everyone speculates that Anna lost her mind, and that's why the mural was finished the way it was. Before what happened to her was revealed, what did you suspect? Were you surprised by what did happen?
- 5) The novel tackles a lot of tough subject matter within the alternating storylines. Was there one plot point that resonated with you more than the others?
- 6) For both of these characters, the mural and art become part of a healing process. For Anna, it is the death of her mother, and for Morgan, the accident and time in prison. Is there something similar in your life that has helped you heal from trauma and hardship?
- 7) As you were reading, did you expect Oliver and Morgan to fall in love? Why or why not? Do you think Oliver is good for Morgan, and vice versa?
- 8) How did you react to Jesse helping Anna to cover up the murder and in doing so abandoning his life? Do you agree with Anna's decision to allow him to do so?
- 9) On page 382, Anna and Morgan's connection is revealed, as is Jesse's reasoning for requesting that Morgan restore the mural. Did you anticipate this connection?
- 10) The revelation about Judith Shipley's true identity is a huge twist at the end of the novel. Did you suspect anything about this? Do you agree with her decision to change her identity completely and start a new life? Would you have come back all those years later?
- 11) Morgan spends a lot of time thinking about Emily Maxwell and how her actions impacted her life. What do you think about her decision to visit her in the end? Would you have done the same? How do you imagine that visit went?
- 12) What do you think the future has in store for Morgan?