

Book Club Discussions



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SEVERED RELATIONS

Murder behind the gates of Fremont Place was unusual; two children and a nanny slaughtered in the home of a rich young lawyer and his beautiful wife was unheard of. When shunned detective, Finn O'Brien, answers the call. With his partner, Cori Anderson, they follow a trail of bodies and shattered relationships from the ladies who lunch to the dive bars of Hollywood until they uncover the horrific truth behind the murders. What comes next will either bind Cori and Finn together for eternity or severe their relationship in the cruelest cut of all.

1) FINN O'BRIEN IS A MAN WITH A FOOT IN TWO COUNTRIES.

Is Finn's cultural background - large family, catholic education, an immigrant when he was already grown - a hindrance to him as a hero? Does his sensitivity detract from his ability to do his job or add to it?

2) CORI ANDERSON IS NO LESS A PRODUCT OF HER CULTURE.

Cori is a hardscrabble kind of girl. What qualities in Cori help to create a great professional partnership with Finn? What traits do they share that make them stronger together and which set them at odds? Do you ever see them having a personal relationship?

3) THIS BOOK IS ALL ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS

There are four 'families' in this story that bear scrutiny: Elizabeth and Sam, Mort and his girls, Medium Man and his boy, Cori and Amber. How are they the same? Is familial love less important if the family is less sophisticated or educated?

4) THE CRIME IN SEVERED RELATIONS IS VERY RAW

Sadly, children are murdered everyday. Did you feel that the subject was handled well?

5). THE BAD GUYS WERE REALLY BAD, WEREN'T THEY?

Mort and Medium Man are both simple and complex. Name one instance where you see both of these points. Were their actions understandable and supported by their life philosophy, their financial situations, and their emotional intelligence?

6) ELIZABETH BARNETT ESCAPES JUSTICE

Is Elizabeth guilty of murder since she only put the forces into motion? Some readers think she got away with murder, others see the ending as a realistic depiction of the failure of a system and still others blame Finn's empathy toward Elizabeth for the miscarriage of justice. What are your thoughts? Was Elizabeth mad or a sociopath? Was the ending appropriate?

8) FINN O'BRIEN WAS OBSESSED WITH ELIZABETH BARNETT

Was it because he was physically drawn to her or was he emotionally tied to her because he identified the pain of her loss with the pain his mother experienced when Alexander died? Does Finn harbor a prejudice against wealthy men like Sam? Is Finn simply a white knight by temperament? Did Finn ever see Elizabeth in a true light and ignore the signs?