



# Book Club in a Bag

## Discussion Questions

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### *A Calamity of Souls* by David Baldacci

1. What was your reaction to the opening chapter, in which Jerome is being arrested? How did the scene set your expectations for the rest of the novel?
2. By the end of the novel, Jack and Desiree each needed the other to get a not-guilty verdict for their clients. What qualities/traits in each of them were critical to the success of the partnership?
3. After agreeing to represent Jerome, Jack immediately doubts whether he should have done so and if he has the skill to make a sound case for his client. What factors created this uncertainty in Jack and how do you think he overcomes them?
4. How do you think the case would have played out had Jack stepped down and allowed Desiree to take over completely? Additionally, how do you think it would have turned out had Desiree never come to town to offer her expertise?
5. In Freeman County, many of the citizens are resistant to change and the Black-white divide is staunchly held, even to the point of framing a Black couple for murder. While this is a fictional county, how did this story teach you about that period in American history? Did you learn something new? If yes, what was it?
6. While Jack and Desiree aren't on trial for committing any crimes, they are still villainized for defending their Black clients and furthering the cause of social justice. Their work risks their lives, and the lives of their loved ones. What would you have done if you found yourself in that position? Why?
7. Hilda Lee has a past she wants to keep hidden and an outward appearance she wants to keep up. How did this affect the way she raised her children? What cues did Jack pick up on that shaped his view of the world, even if he didn't realize it?
8. Justice is achieved at the end of the novel, but the ending is not completely happy. How did you expect the story to end and why did you think that? How did the actual ending make you rethink the ways in which people hold on to hate?

The above questions were taken from  
<https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/A-CALAMITY-OF-SOULS-enhanced-reading-group-guide-4.pdf>  
to enhance your discussion of the book.

# Author Biography

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David Baldacci published his first novel, *Absolute Power*, in 1996. The feature film adaptation followed, with Clint Eastwood as its director and star. In total, Baldacci has published 50 novels for adults; all have been national and international bestsellers, and several have been adapted for film and television. His novels are published in over 45 languages and in more than 80 countries, with 150 million copies sold worldwide. Baldacci has also published seven novels for young readers.

Author Website: <https://www.davidbaldacci.com/>

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