



Book Club in a Bag

Discussion Questions

The Vanishing Half by Brit Bennett

1. Stella and Desiree grow up identical and, as children, inseparable. Later, they are not only separated, but lost to each other, completely out of contact. What series of events and experiences leads to this division and why?
2. When did you notice cracks between the twins begin to form? Do you understand why Stella made the choice she did? What did Stella have to give up, in order to live a different kind of life?
3. Consider the various forces that shape the twins into the people they become, and the forces that later shape their respective daughters. In the creation of an individual identity or sense of self, how much influence do you think comes from upbringing, geography, race, gender, class, education?
4. Kennedy is born with everything handed to her, Jude with comparatively little. What impact do their relative privileges have on the people they become? How does it affect their relationships with their mothers and their understanding of home? How does it influence the dynamic between them?
5. Desiree's job as a fingerprint analyst in Washington DC is to use scientific methods to identify people through physical, genetic details. Why do you think the author chose this as a profession for her character?
6. Compare and contrast the love relationships in the novel –Desiree and Early, Stella and Blake, and Reese and Jude. What are their separate relationships with the truth? How much does telling the truth or obscuring it play a part in the functionality of a relationship? How much does the past matter in each case?
7. What does Stella feel she has to lose in California, if she reveals her identity to her family and her community? When Loretta, a black woman, moves in across the street, what does she represent for Stella?

The above questions were taken from
<https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/576782/the-vanishing-half-by-brit-bennett/9780525536291/readers-guide/>
to enhance your discussion of the book.

Author Biography

Born and raised in Southern California, Brit Bennett earned her MFA in fiction at the University of Michigan. Her debut novel *The Mothers* was a New York Times bestseller, and her second novel *The Vanishing Half* was an instant #1 New York Times bestseller. Her essays have been featured in *The New Yorker*, the *New York Times Magazine*, *The Paris Review*, and *Jezebel*.

<https://britbennett.com/about>

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