

WHAT REMAINS OF YOU

A Novel

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Book Club Questions

1. What would you do if you found a letter from a partner, family member, or friend like the one Diana finds from Tom? Would you ignore the message or investigate? Could you live with not understanding what the message means?
2. Diana's family and friends each respond differently to Tom's letter. Lakshmi offers to help her figure out the truth, Duncan's grief is brought to the forefront, Jonathan tells her to "let this all go and move on," Andrea lashes out, and Vivian worries about the impact of the letter on Diana and her children. What do you think of each character's reaction? Which response did you identify with the most? How do you think you would respond if a friend or loved one showed such a letter to you?
3. After Diana's home is burgled, she elects not to reach out to law enforcement for help, nor does she bring the letter to the police. What do you think of these decisions? What would you have done if you were in her place?
4. When Diana and Grace talk about the fire and William's death, Grace explains: "Sometimes, not looking too closely is the only way to get through a terrible time." What do you think about this statement? Is Grace's coping mechanism healthy, or does it exacerbate her grief?
5. After Diana and Lakshmi fail to find Jessica in Nashua, they discuss the possible reasons Tom didn't tell Diana the truth

when he was alive. Lakshmi says: “We keep part of ourselves secret . . . Maybe there are always limits to knowing someone else. Even when we love them.” Do you agree with Lakshmi that there can be limits to knowing our loved ones? Do you agree that we all keep parts of ourselves secret? If so, how do these barriers affect our connections to one another?

6. To both Diana and Jessica, Tom said the “past stays in the past.” What do you think he meant by this statement? Do our past actions and experiences really stay in the rearview mirror, or are they always with us?
7. Have you ever learned a secret about a friend, family member, or coworker that completely changed how you saw them? How did you respond to this new information? How did it influence your relationship?
8. Grief and loss play a central role in this story. They are “silent and persistent companions” for several characters. What do you think about this novel’s depiction of grief? Does it change how you might approach someone experiencing loss?
9. After finally uncovering Tom’s truth, Diana elects to keep what she’s learned to herself, with the exception of telling her son an abridged version of what his father did. Do you agree with her decision to tell Duncan some of Tom’s story? Would you have made the same choice? If not, how would you have responded?
10. At the end of the book, Diana realizes that, now that she knows the truth, how she sees Tom is up to her: *How I remember him*, she thinks. *That’s it. How I choose to remember him is up to me.* If you learned news that broke your world apart, like the news Diana learns about Tom, would you be able to choose how to remember the person who caused the pain? Could you separate the person you love from their actions? Could you forgive them? Do you think Diana will be able to forgive Tom and move on?