

Reading Group Guide

1. Do you consider Frank a sympathetic character? Did his death change your opinion of him?
2. How does the hidden house layered within Mattie's house symbolize her relationship with Caleb and the rest of her family?
3. How does the book's wintry setting affect the events that take place? How does it constrain and aid the characters?
4. How did the alternating points of view between Alice and Mattie shape your impressions of both women?
5. How does the Greek mythology featured throughout the book inform the book's setting, characters, and events?
6. At the start of chapter thirteen, Oren decides Mattie is Princess Leia and Alice is Rey in their game of *Star Wars*. To what degree does this reflect Mattie and Alice's relationship? Are there other roles you would assign them or some of the other characters in the book?
7. Many characters are either running from the past or stuck in the past. In both cases, voices call to them from the past, whether it's Mattie's mom, Caleb, or Davis. How effectively does each of the characters deal with these voices? Are there voices from your past that echo in your ears? ►

Reading Group Guide *(continued)*

8. Forgiveness and vengeance are major themes in the book. How do they balance and counteract each other?
9. How does the book's ending subvert society's expectations of how families are supposed to look and the roles and responsibilities people are supposed to take on?
10. To what degree do you think Caleb's actions were driven by vengeance versus love?
11. Support between women plays a big role in the book, not only with Mattie and Alice but with Doreen, Atefeh, and Sister Martine as well. How does this contrast with the men in the book? How do you think this will affect Oren as he grows up? 