

## Suggested Questions for Book Clubs

Below you will find a list of suggested book club questions, many compiled from the author's numerous book club presentations and community speaking engagements.

1. Can you imagine any scenario wherein a loving parent would take the life of his or her child?
2. Do you believe Sam was temporarily insane at the time he committed the crime to which he freely confessed?
3. If Sam intended to die alongside his child, why didn't he use the two remaining bullets in his gun?
4. If Sally went willingly with her father on the morning of her death, then why didn't she sign the murder/suicide note herself? How much of her illness, and the nature of life within an asylum, do you think Sally understood?
5. What role does shame play in this story?
6. Do you believe Sam's background as an immigrant influenced his decision in any way?
7. In your opinion, was Sam's act one of courage, compassion, or temporary insanity?
8. Was the judge's sentence in this case appropriate to the crime?
9. Do you do think Sam would be given a prison sentence, rather than probation, if his crime were to take place today?
10. Assuming other Levin family members knew, or suspected, Sam's intentions on the morning of Sally's death, why didn't they try to stop this tragedy from happening?
11. Do you feel the author's grandmother had a role in the decision to end Sally's life? If so, in what way(s)? If not, why?
12. Why do you think the author's mother left town just days before Sally was scheduled for commitment?
13. Is "mercy killing" ever a justifiable act? If so, was it justified in this instance?
14. In what way(s) has medical treatment of the mentally ill advanced over the years?
15. Has the stigma of mental illness lessened since the time of Sally's death? If so, in what way(s)?

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