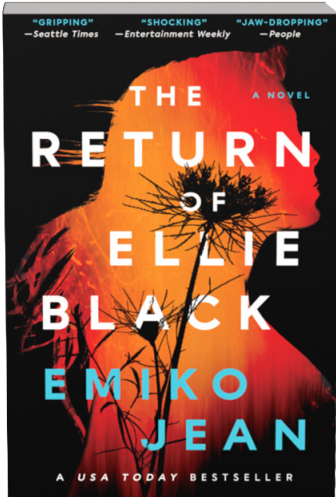




READING GUIDE

THE RETURN OF ELLIE BLACK EMIKO JEAN

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. As the story unfolds, Chelsey prioritizes the investigation over every other facet of her life—even when she has been directly ordered not to. Is she right to do so?
2. How does the novel explore what children inherit from their parents, both biologically and psychologically?
3. Part of the narrative is told from Ellie's perspective, which is later revealed to be her written testimony. How did hearing her voice shape your reading experience?
4. How do the kidnapped girls find ways to preserve their sense of self in circumstances designed to strip them of control?
5. How do you think Emiko Jean would define loyalty? Should loyalty belong primarily to family, found family, or justice?
6. Does a victim have the right to remain silent, even when their testimony could save other lives?
7. If you were a close friend of Ellie's, how would you approach her sudden reappearance?
8. Gender is a central theme in the novel. How do female characters resist or survive the roles imposed on them?
9. Many of the characters in the novel blur the boundaries between victim and perpetrator. At what point does complicity become villainy?
10. Discuss Chelsey's relationship with Noah. Do you think they have a functional marriage, and will they stay together in the future?
11. Were you satisfied with the ending? How does Emiko Jean challenge the idea of a happy ending?