DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR *DARK ENOUGH TO SEE THE STARS*

1. The author chose to incorporate COVID—almost feature it as a villain—in this story. What reaction did that elicit from you? Do you feel we’ve all experienced a seminal chapter in world history, and it deserves this kind of attention, or were you disappointed to relive it? What was the significance of Rick’s death, and did it impact you emotionally?

2. Was Sam’s Cousin Mel a good or bad influence in his life?

3. The aftermath of WWII and The Holocaust weighed heavily on the book’s characters. Phil and his uniform-burning as catharsis set the tone for that. How strongly do you feel this influenced Sam’s parents in their actions toward Violet?

4. Would you disown your child for marrying the wrong person? Is this entirely a thing of the past?

5. Have you ever gone to the lengths Deborah did to make Sam jealous? Do you know someone who has?

6. The actions of characters in the 1940s and later years echoed strongly into the present day setting. What are some instances you remember?

7. Do you know someone with a “found family” as opposed to their biological/adoptive one? What connection (other than Deanna) do you think is strongest for Ronni in the Davidson Family?

8. When Sam kissed Patricia, he initiated the end of a strong, lengthy friendship between the Davidsons and Leons. Should he, or his parents, have told Deborah what took place?

9. Was “Chet” absolved of his wrongdoing? Did this book change your opinion of him? How does it differ from your perception of the character in *It All Comes Back to You*?

10. What are your feelings about Rick’s sons being absent from his funeral? Does that evoke memories of similar situations at that point in the pandemic?

11. When Samuel saw his great-grandfather’s personally donated Nazi uniforms in the museum, what do you think he was feeling? Do new generations need reconnection to history through such direct links? What role do museums play?

12. Did you consider an intentional contrast between the effects of WWII on history and the effects of COVID on history? On the characters in this story?

13. Rick says, “No one hates a bad cop more than a good cop. No one.” What are your feelings on this and the subject of law enforcement in general?

14. Did you expect Elise and Max to become as comfortable as they seemed in Alabama? Do you think they could have remained there and been happy?

15. If you were casting this story as a movie, what actors would you cast in which roles?

16. Have you ever known a two-year-old who spoke in sentences? Was toddler Violet’s speech believable to you? What about precocious Maddie and her shared love of words with Ronni?

17. Violet Glenn’s beauty defined her life, and may well have been a disadvantage in some ways. This was part of the culture in her era. Will Ronni’s pretty daughter be treated differently? Ronni’s objection to beauty pageants, for instance, is noted in the book. In the 2020s, will she encourage Violet to find her value and self-esteem in other places, i.e. in her kindness, intelligence, athletics, art, et cetera?

18. Ronni has a running joke about people suggesting the topic for her next book. Where do authors get their ideas? Do you think suggestions like this have resulted in best sellers?

19. Were you aware that COVID-19 was the leading cause of death for active law enforcement officers in 2020 and 2021 in the U.S.? Were there other revelations for you about COVID and its impact?

20. Music plays a background role through much of this book. Have you listened to the soundtrack? If you’d like to include it in your book club meeting, here is a link: <https://bit.ly/DarkEnoughtoSeetheStarsSOUNDTRACK>

It’s also available on the Home page at www.bethduke.com.

Please feel free to email beth@bethduke.com with additional questions you may have, and also to forward a group photo for inclusion in her website gallery, The Most Beautiful Readers in the World. Thank you for reading!

