

# A FLICKER IN THE DARK

## STACY WILLINGHAM DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The book opens with a prologue, the first line being: "I thought I knew what monsters were." Why do you think the author chose to start the book with this line? What were your expectations for the book after reading the prologue?
2. Chloe struggles to define "home." On page 20, she says: "Home. That, too, is a loaded phrase. A home isn't just a house, a collection of bricks and boards held together by concrete and nails. It's more emotional than that. A home is safety, security." What is Chloe's home? How did you define the idea before reading, and how (if at all) has that definition changed?
3. On page 76, Chloe says this about lightning bugs: "I remember getting home that night and seeing the lightning bugs in our driveway, twinkling like constellations in the sky, the way they always did. But that night, it felt different. They felt different. I remember catching one in my palm, feeling it flutter between my fingers as I brought it in, placing it delicately inside a water glass, covering the lip in plastic." Lightning bugs can be seen throughout the story. What do they symbolize in *A Flicker in the Dark*?
4. The juxtaposition between darkness and light is everywhere in this book. How do these images, these feelings, play off one another?
5. How are the past and present treated in *A Flicker in the Dark*, and how does this affect readers' understanding of events as the book progresses? How does this affect your understanding of Chloe?
6. On page 199, Chloe says: "I've seen that look before. . . . That look that shows the very first hint of concern—not for my safety, but for my mind. That look that makes me feel like my words are not to be trusted, that my slow unravel is getting faster and faster, spiraling out of control, until pretty soon, I'll be nothing." How did you feel about Chloe as a narrator? Reliable or unreliable? Why do you think the author chose to portray Chloe this way?
7. Chloe is a trained psychologist; however, due to the trauma she has experienced, she has a hard time taking her own advice. In fact, she often ends up putting herself in dangerous situations trying to find out what happened to the missing girls. Do you think she ever went too far?
8. The setting of Louisiana summers plays an important part in *A Flicker in the Dark*. How does it tie various characters together? How does it pull them apart?
9. What were the book's twists? Did you guess them? Which was the most surprising?
10. Given the ending, what do you see next for Chloe?

