A souvenir from Mapleville

SILENCED

Book Club Discussion Guide

For discussion after reading SILENCED. These questions contain spoilers.

1. Judgment

Did you find yourself judging certain characters early in the novel, only to later understand them more fully? What changed your perspective?

2. Good Mother

Annie's private question — "Am I a good mother?" — runs under the whole novel. At what moments in the story did you find yourself answering that question for her, even before she asked it herself?

3. The Lesson Plan

Silenced is full of half-truths told for what feel like good reasons. Which lie in the book bothered you the most, and why that one?

4. A Town Like Mapleville

Vermont is practically a character in this book — small, close-knit, hard to hide in. How did the setting shape what was possible for Annie and Cara, in a way it might not have in a bigger, more anonymous place?

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5. Keeping Secrets to Keep the Peace

Which character made you a little uncomfortable — because they reminded you of your own choices as a parent, a child, or someone keeping a secret to keep the peace?

6. Jump to Conclusions

Many characters in this novel jump to conclusions. Annie assumes Cara is a drug addict, and Grammy assumes Cara is pregnant. What are other examples? Which misunderstandings created the worst obstacles? Which stereotype did you relate to the most?

7. Humor in Difficult Situations

Even during painful moments, the story includes humor. Did the humor make the difficult scenes more effective for you? Why or why not?

8. Silenced

The title is Silenced. Who, in your opinion, is silenced in the novel? Is it only one character, or does everyone experience some form of being unheard? Who or what is silencing others? What helps Annie open up and speak the truth? When have you felt silenced?

Closing Conversation

If you could sit down over coffee with Annie — or Cara — what would you tell them? What advice, encouragement, question, or challenge would you offer?