

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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- The novel is told in alternating points of view from the characters in a small Texas town. Whose story affected you the most and why?
- Kimmie Jo says “He (Tommy) would have been cute if he tried a little.” How do you feel about a statement like this? What does it reveal about this character’s view on society and how she views others and herself? Is there too much pressure to be cute, good-looking, attractive in society? In high school?
- What do you think happened to Tommy Smythe? What do you wish happened to Tommy? Why do you think the author chose to leave Tommy’s disappearance a mystery?
- Do you think Tommy’s disappearance could be a metaphor for that lost feeling we have or feel in our lives?
- A major theme in this book is the existence of all possibilities. Do you believe, as Tommy does, that “All possibilities exist (p. 9)”?
- Tommy wrote “We leave pieces of ourselves everywhere. Every time we meet someone, they take some of us and we take some of them. That’s how it is. Little particles stick us together. Bit by bit. I think it’s how we get whole.” Do you agree?
- Karla’s story in the book is intense and tragic. Kimmie Jo says on p. 8, “Like something might have changed if we’d done one thing different before.” Do you think Karla’s outcome could have changed if she’d done one thing differently? If her family had made better choices? Did you sympathize with Karla or did you judge?
- How do you think Tommy would feel if he knew everyone was looking for and missing him? How would he handle it?
- Alvin struggles between love and hate for his father. Why do you think he stays? Do you think he’ll leave one day? Why or why not?
- In Christmas Ornaments, Dwight has an epiphany when he realizes that his father enjoyed beating his mother and himself. Have you ever witnessed or been in an abusive situation? How did you handle it? Is there anything you wish you had differently? Why?