

Reading Guide

OLDTOWN Fly, Sparrow, Fly

Elementary

1 What is the major conflict in the novel? What are some secondary conflicts? Do they all get resolved? How do different characters handle unresolved conflicts?

2 Who is your favorite character in the novel? Why?

3 Since this is set in a small town, the characters know each other fairly well. Could this storyline work well in a city? What changes are needed to make it work well in a city?

4 DNA is a part of a human's identity. Is it the most important part? Why do you think so?

5 There are several wounded relationships in the story. How did two of them get wounded? Were they healed, even partly, by the end? Who do you think handled their woundedness well? How did they manage it?

Secondary

1 Rhona is Syn's aunt, not her mother. Does she overstep natural boundaries by taking Syn into her home to help her? Why do you think so?

2 What are three major conflicts in the story, and are they resolved? If so, how? If not, how do the characters deal with the continuing conflict? Did anyone handle conflict particularly well?

3 What do you think about Zhang's reaction to the DNA revelation? Why do you think he responded as he did? Does he have other identity issues outside of his relationship with Syn?

4 Who are some significant secondary characters who make a difference in the novel? Can people who are on the outside of a family sometimes do more to heal woundedness than the family members themselves? Why would that be?

5 If you were able to continue the novel, what would happen next?

Adult/Book Clubs

- 1** At first, Nia seems unable to comprehend how her actions affect others. How realistic is her cluelessness? Does Rhona handle the situation well? How would you have handled it?
- 2** What are some differences between Rhona and Dermid's relationship and Nia and Zhang's? Would there be a way to repair Nia's marriage after what she had done? How? What other issues would have to be addressed in healing their marriage?
- 3** Is Andy also a victim of the DNA identity issue? How? What help does he need to heal his woundedness?
- 4** Syn's biological father doesn't appear to believe that Syn is his daughter, yet there is a hint that he knows it's quite possible. Which characters in the story would be the best to confront him on the truth of the matter, if that were possible? Would a forced admission help Syn? Why or why not?
- 5** Who are your favorite characters? Why? Do they remind you of someone in real life?

Paperback/Journal Reflections

- 1** Have I been wounded by the cluelessness of other people, where they don't mean to hurt me, but their actions do harm? How do I deal with them? Did Rhona handle her sister effectively? What might I have done differently?
- 2** How many characters are victims of circumstances in the story? Does part of interacting with others include being misunderstood? Why or why not?
- 3** Was there anyone in the story that particularly aggravated me? How do I wish things had played out with that character?
- 4** Do I have someone in my corner, someone who cares enough to understand the mystery of my wounds even if I can't talk about it? Am I that person for anyone else?
- 5** If I were able to visit OldTown in real life, where would I go first? Who would I most like to spend time with? Why?