



BOOK CLUB KITS

THIS KIT CONTAINS

- ◆ 5 Regular Paperback Copies

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

KILLERS OF THE FLOWER MOON BY DAVID GRANN

- 1) What do the contemporary media reports on the wealth and lifestyle of the Osage reflect about white perceptions of Native Americans (pp. 6-7; pp. 76-77)? In what way do they lay a foundation for the way the murders and mysterious deaths were treated by law enforcement?
- 2) What was your first impression of William Hale (p. 17)? How does Grann bring to life his strengths and appeal, as well as the darker side of his nature? What qualities does he share with people who achieve power and influence today?
- 3) How did you respond to the description of law enforcement in America during the 1920s (p. 19)? What elements most shocked or surprised you? What made the situation in Osage County particularly chaotic? What effect did this have on the investigations into the deaths of Anna Brown and Charles Whitehorn?
- 4) What does Grann's account of the relationship between the United States government and Native Americans contribute to your understanding of the country's history (pp. 37-44)? How did government policies affect individuals like Mollie and her family? What does Grann capture in his description of Lizzie's death: "Lizzie's spirit had been claimed by Jesus Christ, the Lord and Savior, and by Wah'Kon-Tah, the Great Mystery" (p. 36)?
- 5) Discuss the circumstances that distinguished the Osage from other Native American tribes, including the actions taken by tribal leaders early in the century; the influx of white settlers and oil prospectors; the granting of headrights; and the guardianship system (pp. 78-80).
- 6) What is the significance of the murder of Barney McBride, the oilman who went to Washington to seek help for the Osage (p. 68) and of W.W. Vaughan, the attorney who worked with private detectives investigating the murders (p. 93-4)?
- 7) What does Grann's portrait convey about J. Edgar Hoover (p. 107)? What traits stand out and what do they foretell about Hoover's future as director of the FBI?
- 8) In what ways does Tom White combine the qualities of the Old West and of the modern bureaucratic system Hoover is trying to create? How does this influence the steps he takes in investigating the murders? How do the various views of White, including the stories of his childhood and his work as a Texas Ranger (pp. 137-153), shape your impressions of him? Would you define him as the hero of the book?
- 9) How were manufactured evidence, suborned testimony, and false confessions used to divert the FBI investigation? What role did independently hired private eyes and informants play in the search for the truth?
- 10) The crimes in Osage County involved many levels of deception and betrayal. In addition to the actual conspirators, who else either directly profited from the crimes or was silently complicit in them? In what ways did accepted mores encourage the corruption that plagued the investigation?