



BOOK CLUB KITS

THIS KIT CONTAINS

◆ 6 Hardcover Copies

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

REMARKABLY BRIGHT CREATURES BY *SHELBY VAN PELT*

- 1) What kind of person do you think Marcellus would be if he were human? What qualities do Marcellus and Tova both share that make this remarkable friendship a success?
- 2) Each of these characters – animal and human – need each other in a specific way, even if they don't realize this at first. What qualities bind these characters to each other? Are they connected by loss, grief or something else?
- 3) On page 9, Tova empathizes with the sharks in the big aquarium tank, musing that she “understands what it means to never be able to stop moving, lest you find yourself unable to breathe.” Why do you think she feels so compelled to keep busy? What would happen if she simply stopped?
- 4) In contrast to how Tova keeps busy, Cameron emerges as a character who deals with grief by remaining stagnant, refusing to even try to reach his potential, much to the frustration of those who care about him. Why do you think he sabotages himself? Have you ever had someone like this in your life?
- 5) Marcellus is extremely smart – smarter than any human he encounters. Have you had encounters with animals – octopuses or otherwise – who demonstrated surprising levels of intelligence, emotional or otherwise? Have you felt “seen” by an animal or felt a relationship with an animal deepen upon earning their trust?
- 6) Tova reflects on her experience caring for her husband through his illness and eventual passing, and with no surviving family to do the same for her, she worries about being a burden on her friends as she ages. How do you view the role of community and family in caring for older people? How did Tova's views on this change throughout the book, and why do you think they did?
- 7) Tova's Swedish Dala horses are some of her most treasured possessions. Why do you think that is? Are there heirlooms in your family that carry a similar significance?
- 8) This novel explores different characters who are faced with major choices: They can open themselves up to something new and take an unexpected, daring opportunity or they can continue on as they have been. Have you ever faced a moment in your life where a critical choice could change everything? Did you take the leap or not?
- 9) Marcellus's life in captivity is much different than the life of an octopus in the wild – and eventually, Terry reveals that Marcellus was rescued from the sea after a life-threatening injury. Aquariums play an important role in education and conservation but some people view keeping animals, especially intelligent ones, in captivity with skepticism. What do you think?
- 10) In the last few pages of the novel, Tova and Cameron realize how they are truly connected. What do you imagine they are doing a year from the novel's end?