

#1 *NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF
COLD COLD HEART

TAMI
HOAG



THE BITTER SEASON
READING GROUP GUIDE

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you think Nikki Liska's transfer to Cold Case changed the dynamic of her family situation? Do you think a single father would have made the same decision? Do men and women treat their jobs differently in the police department and beyond?
2. Gene Grider is a more old-school kind of cop. Have cops evolved over time? Why or why not? What is the role of police today? Is it different in small towns than in big cities? Is it different when police know the victim personally? Why do you think Grider was so attached to the Duffy family?
3. There are several families with their own struggles and secrets in *The Bitter Season*, from the Chamberlains to the Duffys to the Nilsens. What do all of these families have in common, and how are they different in their follies, their joys, and their tragedies?
4. Consider the picture the Chamberlain children painted of their family. Given that Sondra and Lucien Chamberlain were not alive to defend themselves, do you think it was an accurate portrayal? In what ways were their family unhappy? Did they deserve the punishment they received?
5. What was your first impression of the Duffy family and how did it change as you continued reading? Was their behavior justified in the end? How would you judge their moral compass?
6. What do you think of Diana and Ken Sato's relationship? What do you think each is getting out of it? Do you think there was any genuine love or affection?
7. Adoption plays a role in *The Bitter Season*. What are the potential emotional and mental ramifications of adoption for the birth parents, the child, and the adoptive parents?
8. What does Diana mean when she tells Charlie, "They're dead. . . . We're free. . . ." And why did Charlie know that it wasn't true?
9. What do you think of the secrets Evi keeps from her husband, and what are her reasons behind not opening up?
10. What did you think of Donald Nilsen and the choices he made? Do you think they were the right ones? Did your impression of Nilsen change at all while reading?
11. What was your first impression of Evi, and how did it change throughout the book?
12. Put yourself in Jennifer Duffy's shoes. If you were to meet Evi in the present moment, how would you react? How would you feel?
13. The note that Evi received said, "It all worked out for you." Do you agree with that? Why or why not?
14. Do you think justice was served? Were the characters' lives better or worse for reopening the case?
15. Were you surprised by the ending? Why?

Warm up when things get chilly and cool down when temperatures rise with these hot and cold

COCKTAIL PAIRINGS FOR *THE BITTER SEASON*

“HOT-ON-THE-TRAIL OLD FASHIONED”

Sugar cube
3 drops Angostura bitters
Maraschino cherries
Orange slice
Splash club soda
2 oz bourbon
Hot water

Place sugar cube in glass and douse with three drops of Angostura bitters. Muddle with a cherry, the orange slice, and the club soda. Ditch the sad fruit remains, add bourbon, and top with hot water. Garnish with fresh fruit.



“THE ICY REVOLVER”

2 oz rye-heavy bourbon
½ oz coffee liqueur
2 dashes orange bitters
Ice
Orange peel

Combine the bourbon, coffee liqueur, and orange bitters in a mixing glass and fill with ice. Stir well until chilled, about 30 seconds. Strain into chilled cocktail glass. Garnish with a wide strip of orange peel.

