

Southfield Public Library

She left me the gun by Emma Brockes

Discussion questions used at SPL May 12 & 13, 2015

1. Are there any specific passages that struck you as significant—or interesting, profound, amusing, illuminating, disturbing, sad...? What was memorable?
2. Were you engaged in the story? Were you curious about Paula's life before she became a wife and mother? After, the court case and shooting her father? How about other family members?
3. Do you think the author did a good job of telling her mother's story? Do you feel connected to the characters?
4. Why do you think Paula did not share her entire past with Emma when she was dying? Has it been your experience that your parents talk about their life before marriage and children? Why is that?
5. Emma's father cautions her to "be careful how much of this you want to know" when she decides to research the court documents on her grandfather's murder conviction. Do you think this was a good decision for Emma?
6. A common source of family legacies is "Some things are too painful to discuss while people are living but too important to be left unsaid after they die." What are your thoughts on this quote?
7. The author describes South Africa as if it is a major character in the book. How important is the setting to this story?
8. Let's talk about the title of the book: How does the title add to the plot? What does it mean?
9. What are the implications for the future? Are there long- or short-term consequences to the issues raised in the book? Are they positive or negative...affirming or frightening?
10. Are there any lessons to be learned from reading this book? Has it broadened your perspective about victims of incest, child molestation, or even the legal system in other countries and how they deal with crime?
11. Overall, did you like or dislike the book? Would you recommend the book? Why? Why not?

Southfield Public Library

General discussion questions

- For the person who chose the book – What made you want to read it? What made you pick it for the book club? Did it live up to your expectations?
- How is the book structured? First person? Third person? Flashbacks? Narrative devices? Do you think the author did a good job with it?
- How would you describe the author’s writing style? Concise? Flowery? How is language used in this book? Read aloud a passage that really struck you. How does that passage relate to the book as a whole?
- How effective is the author’s use of plot twists? Were you able to predict certain things before they happened? Did the author keep you guessing until the end?
- Did the book hold your interest?
- How important is the setting to the story? Did you feel like you were somewhere else? Did the time setting make a difference in the story? Did the author provide enough background information for you to understand the setting and time placement?
- Which is stronger in the book – the characters or the plots?
- Would you recommend this book to someone else? Why? And to whom?