



READING GROUP QUESTIONS

WARNING: These questions and discussion points contain spoilers. Please do not read on if you haven't already read *The Sixth Window*.

The *Sixth Window* is the story of a young woman, Natalie Gray, who believes she had the perfect marriage to Bernie, a policeman. Together with their daughter, Scarlett, it seemed as if life was complete.

Then one dark winter's morning, Bernie takes their dog for a walk and is ploughed down. It looks like an unfortunate hit-and-run accident, but the reader knows this is not the case.

Many months later, Natalie finds love with her husband's best friend, Ed. She has known Ed all her adult life, and with him she feels safe. For the first time since Bernie died, she feels there is a chance for her and Scarlett to experience a happy family life again.

But then she finds some very dubious photographs via a web link on Ed's computer, and she starts to feel uncomfortable. The situation worsens when she comes home to find Ed comforting her scantily clad teenage daughter, and Natalie decides to flee with Scarlett to what she believes is a place of safety.

As the story develops, Natalie becomes less and less sure of who she can trust, and some terrible truths emerge – about her best friend, her husband, and the place she had considered safe for her daughter. And then, when all seems to have been resolved, Natalie is left with one burning question – a question she can't ask because she might not be able to live with the answer.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. Which of the characters did you feel most drawn to and why?
2. When Bernie is killed at the start of the book, what did you initially imagine might have happened?
3. How did you feel about Natalie moving in with Ed just eighteen months after her husband had died, and what effect do you think this might have had on Scarlett?
4. When Natalie discovers the link to the images on Ed's computer, what did you think of her reaction? What other choices did she have at that point, and what might you have done in the same situation?
5. Natalie feels that she has to get Scarlett as far away from Ed as possible when she discovers him comforting her. What did you believe was happening at that point? Did you think she had any other choices, given that she was at work each day and Scarlett was at home?
6. At what point did you begin to think that Alison wasn't the friend she claimed to be?

7. What did you think of Bernie's excuse for his relationship with Alison? Did you believe he genuinely felt he had no choice and was only seeing her under duress, or was it a convenient excuse? If you had been Natalie, would you have believed him when the truth came out?
8. Ed had known for some time about Bernie's relationship with Alison. He claims he didn't tell Natalie because she would hate him for being the one to break her heart. What do you think of his motives?
9. Scarlett finds herself bored and looking for something to do. This clearly contributes to her desire to investigate the sounds from the other side of the wall. What might Natalie have done to help her daughter through this difficult time?
10. Once Scarlett realises that Lewis has tricked her and taken inappropriate pictures of her with his hidden camera, she is afraid to admit what she has done, fearing he might make the photos public. Clearly, this is a serious problem for teenagers these days, but Scarlett didn't know the photos were being taken. What options did she have to stop this man?
11. At the end of the story, the truth appears to have been laid bare. Natalie knows about Bernie, Alison, and why Ed had the photos. Scarlett is happy to be back in his home. But when Natalie sees the dog collar, a horrible suspicion takes hold. Did Ed kill Bernie? If she asks Ed, will he admit it? If she's wrong, what further damage will it do to their relationship? Natalie has choices now – what should she do?
12. What feelings did the book leave you with?
13. If you had the opportunity to ask the author a question about the book, what would it be?