



---

## READING GROUP QUESTIONS

---

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

Anna Franklyn is a woman of many faces: a professional head teacher, a devoted mother, and a daring secret poker player named Saskia Peterson. For fourteen years, she has worked tirelessly to bury the memory of a devastating choice she made in Nebraska, believing the man involved was long dead. But when a voice on the radio claims to be from her past, promising to reveal the truth about 'the love of his life', Anna's secure world begins to fragment.

As she is haunted by anonymous threats and a predatory loan shark from her student days, Anna feels her pit of deception is growing ever deeper. She is a woman who has spent her life running, only to find that you can never truly hide from who you once were. *The Shape of Lies* is a twisty ride through the charade of a marriage and the terrifying reality of a woman who realises that the person she trusts the most may be the one who wants to destroy her.

---

### DISCUSSION POINTS

---

- The Triple Life of Anna Franklyn:** Anna juggles three distinct identities: the professional head teacher, the devoted mother, and the daring poker player Saskia Peterson. Which version of Anna did you find most authentic? Do you think she was a 'natural liar', or was she simply a woman doing what she had to do to survive her past mistakes? Which version of her would you most like to be?
- First Impressions of Dominic:** Early in the book, Dominic is portrayed as an unthreatening stay-at-home dad who cares for the children and supports Anna's career. Knowing the ending, were there any red flags in his behaviour that you missed?
- The Ethics of the Nebraska Choice:** The secret at the heart of the book is Scott and Anna's decision to sell their baby in Nebraska to pay off a loan shark. Did you find Anna's desperation relatable, or did this act make her an unsympathetic protagonist for you? Do you believe that she has regretted it every day since?
- The 'Scott' on the Radio:** When 'Scott' first calls the radio show, the threat feels purely psychological. At what point did you begin to suspect that the voice on the airwaves wasn't the ghost of Anna's past, but someone much closer to home?
- Intercepted Letters and Stephen:** Dominic intercepted letters from Anna's son, Stephen, for years, even writing back as Anna to tell the boy she wanted no contact. Anna considers this his most unforgivable sin. Do you agree, or were his actual murders (Derek Brent and Roger Jagger) worse?

6. **The Poker Sanctuary:** Anna says that Saskia is the part of her that 'learned to fly' and that she thrives on the adrenaline of the game. Discuss whether her secret life at the casino makes her a better, more resilient person, or does it prove she is addicted to risk?
7. **Wasps as a Weapon of Terror:** Wasps are Anna's ultimate phobia, tied back to the trauma of Scott's death. Discuss the chilling irony of Dominic using a wasp nest as his chosen method to punish Anna in the outhouse. Discuss your own phobias and how you think they affect you.
8. **The Theme of Lying:** The book opens with: "We all lie. To ourselves and to each other." By the end, we see that Anna and Dominic's entire marriage was a charade of mutual deception. Do you think any part of their relationship was real, or was it all just two people playing roles they thought the other wanted?
9. **The Tragedy of Derek Brent:** Derek Brent was an innocent valet who died simply because he borrowed Cameron Edmunds' car. How did his death change your view of the vigilante justice Dominic thought he was dispensing?
10. **Cameron Edmunds – Villain or Victim?** Cameron is a predatory loan shark who fleeces students. However, in this story, he is the one being hunted. Did you feel any satisfaction when he was finally cornered by Tom Douglas, or did you find yourself perversely wanting Saskia to win her showdown to repay his debt?
11. **Tom Douglas's Parallel Struggle:** While Tom is investigating the car park murders, he is also reeling from Kate's cancer diagnosis and Lucy's teenage rebellion. How did Tom's personal life mirror the themes of the case? Did his own family crisis make him more or less effective as a detective?
12. **The Final Page Twist:** The book ends with the real Scott Roberts calling into the radio station from Manchester Airport. Given that he told the world Anna 'nearly killed' him, do you think he is back for a romantic reunion or his own brand of revenge? How do you imagine that catching-up session going?