



An Open Book

Discussion Guide for *Yours is the Night*

- 1 The story is told from five different viewpoints: Matthew's, Mira's, Jasper's, George's, and Henry's. Which of their personalities or perspectives did you most connect with, and why?
- 2 Nature plays a bit of a character in this book: stray birdsong in the forest when there had been none at the front, a symphony of crickets outside the window at Aline's bakery, and the glow worms/fireflies. Did you feel these elements added anything to the scenes, story, or undercurrents?
- 3 The morning Aline welcomes the soldiers into her bakery, "growling stomachs and the miracle of steaming pastries . . . bridged any language obstacle." Have you ever experienced a time when food helped ease tension, build a bridge, or offer a chance for connection that would have been difficult to come by otherwise?
- 4 Jasper Truett has a complex history in the role of "father." Thinking of his relationships with Amelia, Matthew, and Mira, how does his journey as a father play out in unexpected ways?

- 5 Chester gives Matthew an empty artillery shell he pulled from the battlefield, and it is “as hollow as could be.” In the end, the shell has been turned into something that holds light. Can you think of other things in the story that follow a similar transformation from battlefield to light?

- 6 After the zeppelin incident, Henry describes George’s discovery that he was “apparently, astoundingly, made for just such a situation. . . . What if what we believe to be our shortcomings, our oddities, are actually purposeful quirks that suit us for the moments we were made for?” Have you ever experienced a time like this or observed it in others?

- 7 Throughout the story, Henry/Hank struggles to find his voice. You may have even noticed the progression of his bylines in his articles, which changed throughout the story. How do you feel his voice changed along the way, and how does this reflect him as a character? How would the story have been different without Henry?

- 8 Mira promises to keep the lantern lit in the woods to bring her father home. Instead, it brings Matthew, and in doing so, leads to the rest of the matches being spent. And yet Matthew helps her return to the woods and eventually see that promise kept and fulfilled, despite it appearing physically impossible. Have you ever encountered a situation where all reasonable hope seemed gone, only to witness that hope come about in an unlikely way?

9 Those who lived in the year of 1918—the year of a world war, a pandemic, and an uncertain economy—lived in “unprecedented times.” Every day, they were witnessing difficult things they never could have anticipated the scope of. (Sound familiar?) And yet they also lived to witness extraordinary kindness and redemption. We, too, are living in what many like to call “unprecedented times.” What good have you seen during or following our recent trials? What good do you imagine might happen in the years to come?