

Black Cow Discussion Questions

Following are some questions designed to help you take your book club or even personal reading of Black Cow to the next level. Feel free to add your own questions into this list or allow the group to meander as they work through the key issues.

1. How would you describe this novel in one sentence?
2. What are some of the key themes in this book. How do they link into the plot of the book.
3. At the start of the book Freya and James are clearly in trouble. Do their issues seem real and believable? Can you relate to their predicaments?
4. Freya and James are both suffering from stress related conditions, yet they react in different ways. How do their perspectives differ?
5. How do Freya and James change or evolve throughout the course of the story? What events trigger such changes?
6. What about Dylan and Cameron? Do they also change? In what way?
7. In what ways do the events in the books reveal evidence of the author's world view? Is there a message coming out of this novel?
8. Looking at the setting of the book, how does the transition from Sydney to Tasmania impact on the story?
9. How the move change Freya and James' marriage? What might have happened to them if they stayed in their Sydney lives?
10. What role does James' father play in the story?
11. There are several black cows in this book - both literal and metaphorical. Talk about the notion of the black cow. What does it represent and how is it used as a kind of totem?
12. There are many other animals/birds/insects in the book, especially the second half. What is the significance of these creatures in terms of the overall story.
13. There's a small hint of Norse mythology in Freya's lineage. How does this play out in terms of her character development and memories?
14. Did certain parts of the book make you uncomfortable? If so, why did you feel that way? Did this lead to a new understanding or awareness of some aspect of your life you might not have thought about before?

If you'd like Magdalena Ball to visit your book group for a talk, email her at maggieball@compulsivereader.com