

THE OTHER F-WORD

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Thought provoking questions to discuss after reading Natasha Friend's new novel.

1. At the start of the book, Hollis and Milo have different feelings about finding their sperm donor: Hollis doesn't want to do it and Milo does. If you were conceived this way, how do you think you would feel about finding out the identity of your sperm donor?
2. Milo's mothers, Suzanne and Frankie feel differently about Milo finding his sperm donor. Why do you think they have different opinions? Does this make you think that some of the choices your parents make as they relate to you are more about their own feelings than they are about yours?
3. When Milo and Hollis find out they are not the only progeny of their donor—that there are five children, total—how do you think that changes how they each feel about finding their donor, if at all?
4. Do you think Milo wants to find his sperm donor in the hopes of treating his allergies more effectively, because he is just curious to meet his donor, or a combination of the two?
5. Why do you think Hollis is so annoyed by her mother Leigh's unwillingness to get over Pam?
6. Do you think Milo and Hollis feel a bond because they are biological half-siblings? What do you think it is that binds us to our family: nature (our biology), nurture (how, by whom, and with whom we are raised), or a combination of the two?
7. When Milo, Hollis, Frankie, Susanne, and Leigh are eating dinner at a restaurant in Brooklyn, Milo imagines they "probably looked just like a regular family (p. 97)." In this day and age, do you think there is such a thing as a regular family?
8. We learn on p. 133 that Hollis's former friend, Mallory, said something awful to Hollis when the girls were in second grade: "My mom says your mom's lifestyle is an abomination." Why do you think some people care so much about other people's sexual orientation?
9. "None of them get us, dude," Milo says to his friend JJ on p. 245. "They're parents." Do you think parents—whether they are biological or not—are destined not to "get" teenagers, at least to a certain extent? Why or why not?
10. When you think about what will happen to these characters after the book ends, do you think the donor siblings will stay in touch with each other and/or with Will? Why or why not?