

## ***Necessary Ends***

### **Book Club Questions**

1. In the opening scene, Tai is attempting to work through her psychological challenges by volunteering at a SWAT training. Does this approach work? What does she learn throughout the book about her own psychological triggers?
2. Tai is the owner/operator of a gun shop that caters to Civil War reenactors. What are the social and moral challenges that come with such an inheritance? Does the fact that it's in the South make a difference?
3. Tai would not consider herself to be a typical investigator. Do you agree? Which traits are most useful? Which ones are most problematic?
4. Despite her work with Finn, Tai is an amateur sleuth and has no real authority to investigate anything. Why do you think she does so?
5. The same could be said for Trey, for despite his work as a security professional and his volunteer efforts with the crime task force, he is not a law enforcement officer. Why does he keep returning to this work despite his problematic and troubled history with it?
6. What is it about this particular case that make it hard for Trey to resist attempting to solve it? And why is it particularly challenging for him to do so?
7. The romantic dynamic between Tai and Trey is often tension-filled, yet they seem to work well together. Why do you think that is?
8. William Faulkner said, "The past is never dead. It isn't even past." How do the events in both Trey and Tai's past affect their decisions in this present investigation?
9. The perceived divide between "movie" people and "regular" people is on full display in this story. Why do certain characters outside of the movie and television industry find it so fascinating and/or untrustworthy? How do the "movie people" characters engage with the community around them?
10. Trey is an unusual sleuth—his most useful skill, his ability to detect lies, is also his biggest handicap, especially socially. How does this evolving ability play out in this particular investigation, and in his relationship with Tai?
11. The major friendships in this story—between Tai and Rico, between Trey and Keesha, between Trey and Garrity, and especially the triangular relationships between Tai and Trey and Gabriella—are somewhat strained. Does this affect how Tai and Trey proceed with their investigations? With each other?

12. Trey's ability to function in the world depends on his ability to inhabit an identity very different from his life before the car accident, an identity he created himself from a magazine. Is this a process unique to him? Or do we all choose our personas? Are we all actors in our own lives, playing roles that we wrote ourselves?

13. In his work as both a SWAT cop and a premises liability agent, Trey thinks about spaces (empty and otherwise) very differently than most people. What spaces exist in the story, and what meanings do Trey and Tai attribute to them?

14. Anger—and how people deal with it both constructively and not-so-constructively—is an important part of each character's identity. It influences how they see themselves and affects the choices they all make throughout the story. What are some of the things that make Tai and Trey angry? How do they deal with it?

15. Trust is a limited—and complicated—resource for both Tai and Trey. What does it mean to each of them? Do their definitions contradict? Does it work differently in their romantic relationship than it does in their crime-solving partnership?

16. Tai comments that many of the suspects in the film-making world seem so convinced of their made-up reality that they are impervious to actual reality: is this a valid observation? Or is Tai letting her subjective perspective color the situation?

17. The South is often perceived as a rural place without a lot of diversity, but Atlanta bucks these expectations by being both urban and diverse. How do these ideas about “the South” play out against its reality? How does the Atlanta setting differ from the Adairsville setting where the final scenes take place?

18. Tai's choice at the end of the book has been a long time coming—do you think she'll be successful? What challenges do you foresee for her as she begins this new chapter in her life?