

Discussion Questions

1. In *Fractured Truth*, Brynn has taken a position as a deputy sheriff and is now working for the “settled law” and is faced with deciding where her loyalties fall: family or work. Have you ever experienced conflict between your family and your work? Or a conflict between your personal beliefs and your work? How did you resolve this conflict?
2. Maura Keene’s murder appears to be perpetrated by an evil cult, but Brynn is not convinced. Colm tells her, “You can’t fight what you don’t believe exists, Brynn. Evil is real.” Do you agree with Colm? Is the evil that Colm refers to any different from the evil Brynn has seen while on active duty? In the end, what type of evil is Brynn really fighting?
3. Several truths are bent and/or fractured in this book: In Brynn’s mind, her drug abuse is understandable and should be excused, but she thinks Hatch’s involvement in distributing and abusing drugs is wrong. She thinks, *People can find a way to justify just about anything*. Discuss how Brynn justifies her own addictions. What things in your life do you excuse that you would denounce in someone else’s life? What reasons are there that a bad action might be acceptable for one person, but not for another?
4. Another truth that appears skewed in the story is the strict moral code of the Pavees. Discuss some of the “truths” that characters have manipulated to serve their own self-interests. What examples do you see of this in society? In your own community? In your family? In yourself?
5. Brynn faces prejudice in her life, but her actions imply she, too, harbors a bias against the settled townspeople. Discuss how Brynn justifies her own prejudices she often feels toward people outside her clan. Are prejudices ever justified?
6. The Traveller culture lives by a strict moral code. How does that moral code play into the tolerance or lack of tolerance of those outside the clan, as well as those living in the clan? Have you found it difficult to deal with the moral codes within your community, culture, or family for your own life? How do your own moral beliefs affect how you see others?

7. The murder victim Maura Keene was a local high-school student. Throughout her investigation, Brynn draws many parallels between her own high-school experiences and Maura Keene's experiences. *Nothing about high school ever changes. . . . The kids were the same, too: the geeks, the jocks, the thespians, and the mean girls. The preps in their cardigans and the Goths whose black garb expressed their inner angst.* Why do social cliques seem to transcend time? What contributes to these various group dynamics? Do students choose to be identified and labeled in these social cliques, or are those labels forced on them?
8. Brynn saw herself as a “fringer” in high school: *The fringers—on the outside, whether by choice or from being pushed out of the normal clique groups. They walked alone, kept their heads down, dressed to blend in, and worked hard to get through each day unnoticed.* What are some other common labels used among students? How do these labels hurt students? Did Brynn's social status in high school set her up for a life of being on the outside? What group did you identify with in school? How did that influence your self-esteem in later life?
9. Labels can be hurtful and demeaning. Do you think people can overcome labels put on them by others, and, if so, how? Have you been hurt by the terms others have used to define you and how did you handle it? Discuss the dire consequences of this concept as it relates to Eddie and Nevan.
10. Female manipulation can be seen throughout this story. From the reference of Jezebel at the murder scene to the motivations for two murders. Emotional manipulation often escalates to bullying. What are some of the ways to recognize if someone is trying to manipulate you? What is the best way to handle a manipulative person?
11. Brynn makes a comparison between the pack mentality of dogs and that of humans. *Collectively, humans can do so much good, but with a bad leader, that same collection of people so often descends to its lowest common denominator.* Can you cite recent examples from the media of the concept of pack mentality? What group dynamics lead to the rise of a bad pack leader?
12. Despite their shared intimacy, Kevin Doogan has left Bone Gap and Brynn. Later, Brynn discovers the reason for this abandonment. What role has abandonment played in Brynn's life, and how has it defined her personality?

13. When she was young, Brynn discovered her friend was being abused by her mother and instead of feeling horrified at the abuse, she feels jealous. Brynn thinks, *I would have done anything for a mother, even let her hurt me*. Is an abusive mother better than no mother at all? What would be worse, abandonment or abuse? Why?
14. When Brynn meets with her friends, old roles come to the surface and are relived in the social circle. Brynn finds that she easily slips back into the old role she occupied in her high-school peer group. What personality factors play into the role a person plays in their peer group? Are these roles unavoidable?
15. Several parenting styles are called into play in *Fractured Truth*. For instance, Hatch's parents cover for his every mistake; Addy Barton's parents, though supportive, appear unaware of what their child is actually doing; Ona Keene loves her son, even in the face of cultural prejudice; whereas Kitty Meath turns her back on her son for the same reason. What is your opinion of these parenting styles? How is each style attempting to show love—and why might each cause harm instead?
16. *Fractured Truth* introduces Agent Grabowski, an FBI agent specializing in criminal psychology. He takes an interest in Brynn's culture. In the end, did he understand the Traveller community, or did he fall into the same prejudices held by most toward the Pavee subculture?
17. Do you see a shift in Brynn's relationship with Colm in this book? Are Brynn's feelings for Colm purely romantic, or is there another reason she's drawn to him? Is there a pattern in her relationships with men? If so, do you see this pattern as coincidental, or is there something in Brynn's personality that leads her to these unrequited-love relationships?
18. Brynn fails a drug test and her job is in jeopardy. How does she react? Is she still in denial? What motivates her in the end to finally face her addictions?
19. Brynn does something illegal to protect her beloved grandmother. Do you feel that family loyalty is more important than ethics? Would you do something illegal to protect your own family?

20. Sheriff Pusser believes the loss of his daughter was at the hands of a Pavee man. How has Pusser dealt with this loss and with that connection to the Travellers? How can people overcome a bias after facing personal tragedy that seems related to a certain group or culture?
21. Why do you think Sheriff Pusser is so willing to give Brynn a second chance? How do you perceive the relationship between Pusser and Brynn?
22. Several times, Brynn's love for Wilco saved her from her own death, by suicide or accidental overdose. Does Brynn rely too heavily on her dog? What do you think would happen to Brynn if Wilco died? Do you think Brynn could make it on her own, without Wilco?