

## Discussion Questions – Shattered Justice

1. Brynn struggles to avoid drinking during the hen party at the bar with her friends. Meg understands Brynn's addiction problem. Do the others understand but just don't care as they offer her drinks? Why would they do this? What would you do if a member of your circle had a drinking problem and a social event included alcohol?
2. Statistics show that spousal abuse is more prevalent in some cultures than in others. What perpetuates this abuse? Should Brynn have done more to help her friends with this problem? What approach could she take that might meet with the most success? What societal influences lead people to ignoring such issues?
3. In *Shattered Justice*, Brynn needs to work closely with other deputies in the department. How does the combative relationship she has with Harris influence her performance? Have you ever dealt with a difficult coworker that has impacted your work? How did you resolve this conflict?
4. Brynn has a comfortable working relationship with Deputy Nan Parks. Has this caused Brynn to overlook important issues? Have you ever been shocked by the truth about someone you had befriended? How has that revelation changed the way you react to others?
5. Mo Black had been with Chance Walker the night he was murdered, and Mo's husband's violent temper points directly at Hughie as the murderer. Brynn is not convinced. Is her doubt based more on the facts or on her sympathy for her fellow Travellers? Have you judged someone in your life based on your sympathy—or bias—only to discover your judgment was wrong? If so, how did you handle it?
6. Brynn speaks to Wilco often, even though she knows he is deaf. Why do you think she does that? Does this serve a purpose for Brynn herself? Or for others around them?
7. Wilco helps Brynn deal with her depression. Many pet owners agree that pets can sense their owner's mood and act as a comfort or encouragement. How do you think pets sense those moods? In what ways are animals more sensitive to a person than other people might be? What can people learn by witnessing this awareness in animals?
8. The maxim "See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil" comes from seventeenth-century Japan, yet it was handed down as "good teaching" by an Irish Traveller family. However, it resulted in murder. Is there a saying that has guided you or your family? What is it? How might that maxim result in negative actions?

9. Brynn thinks about *haunted warriors and untold truths* as she recounts horrific deeds done in the time of war that were conveniently buried with the participants. What would be justifications for hiding truths in time of war? In what ways would revealing the truths be healing or more devastating?
10. While trying to work on this case, Deputy Parks seems distracted by her daughter's troubles. Brynn is distracted by her fears for Gran. Discuss how your job has been impacted by family issues. Have you found a way to balance job and family responsibilities without jeopardizing either one? How much leeway would you give to an employee with personal problems that affect his or her work?
11. For years Brynn has known that Nina is a kleptomaniac, and yet she has not revealed this to their other friends. Why do you think she does that? How could Brynn handle this situation in a different way, one that would benefit Nina? If she reveals the truth to their friends, how would that influence their relationship with Nina and with Brynn?
12. Justice is shattered in this book because no justice was ever given to Zeke's family years ago. Discuss if there is a time element to justice—after how many years would/should a crime be forgiven? Have you done wrong things in your past that still haunt you? At what point might you forgive yourself? ?
13. The Pavees are fiercely loyal to clan members and mete out their own forms of justice to offenders. Do you think this can help prevent crimes within their clan? Or are these acts of “justice” crimes in and of themselves? Is your view of justice always “by the book,” and if not, how do you justify your view?
14. Princess, the stuffed remains of a long-dead cat, is the object of Mrs. Handie's affection, and she treats the taxidermic cat as if it is alive. Discuss whether this is a comfort to Mrs. Handie or a hindrance to moving on. Have you known people who have what you consider an unnatural attachment to a pet or a person or an object? In what way has it helped or hindered their life?
15. In their careers, Brynn and Wilco deal with death, which requires an ability to be detached. But when death comes to one of their loved ones, it hits them as hard as it does most people. How far removed does someone need to be from your circle of family or acquaintances before you can feel detached from his or her pain or death? Discuss how this “distance” issue influences our worldview. Can you cite recent examples from the media of the concept of distancing from involvement?

16. Kevin Doogan's cousin, Sean, says to Brynn, "Kevin told me about you. That's why I recogni—" and breaks off his words, realizing he recognizes her from her scars. How do you handle meeting people with scars or an obvious disfigurement of some sort? Do you mention that person's disfigurement to others when you are describing him or her? Discuss whether this is a natural reaction and whether it is helpful or hurtful.
17. Brynn isn't the only character suffering from PTSD. Roger Meyer, the train conductor, says he is still haunted by the memory of Zeke on the tracks. Georgia Farrell also suffered from the death of her son and the lack of justice. As a society, do you think we give more attention to traumas suffered by civilians or by our veterans? Why? What are some of the ways to recognize if someone is hiding a trauma or PTSD? What is the best way to help that person?
18. Pusser comments, "Trauma does weird things to memory," making the point that witness testimony can be unreliable. Have you witnessed an incident with someone else and afterward remembered it differently than he or she did? Discuss how faulty memory of a trauma can hurt and benefit us individually and in our court system.
19. Brynn has issues with abandonment, and she finds it hard to let Meg into her life. What reason does she give herself to justify not telling Meg everything? What fears do you think really motivate this behavior? Discuss the importance of having someone to talk to in depth. Have you found people in your life whom you can trust at that level, and if not, why? If you do have someone whom you trust at that level, what challenges has this created in your relationship?
20. FBI agent Grabowski specializes in criminal profiling. When he talks to Brynn, she knows he is analyzing her, as well. How does his analysis help and hurt Brynn? Discuss how you react when you sense someone is analyzing you. How does it influence your actions and your relationship?
21. A shift occurs in Brynn's relationship with Pusser and Grabowski in this book. Are their feelings for her based on their desire to help a coworker, or does each of them have personal reasons for wanting to help her? What do you think those reasons might be? Brynn still doesn't open up fully to them. Think of people who wanted to help you in the past, yet you found it uncomfortable—or threatening—to open up to them. How did you handle that?
22. A long-festering trauma leads to the deaths of several people in *Shattered Justice*. Do you think people can overcome trauma even if justice is never served? If so, how? Have you

been hurt by an injustice that will never be resolved? Discuss how this could influence the rest of your life—and how you might resolve it.