

STASH

A novel by David Klein

Readers' Guide

Warning: Some plot points are revealed in the questions below.

1. Gwen believes that in Morrissey, “You have your life and you’re happy with it, as long as you do your best, look your best, perform your best.” What type of internal or external pressures make Gwen feel this way? What do Gwen’s comments indicate about her seemingly ideal suburban life?
2. Gwen feels awful about the death of James Anderson and keeps reliving the accident in her mind. What is her level of responsibility for what happened? Is she unfairly targeted by the police when threatened with charges of vehicular manslaughter?
3. The first time Gwen goes to tell Jude about the police, she changes her mind and leaves, but the next time she sees Jude, she tells him. Why does Gwen warn Jude that she’d given his name to the police? What are the consequences of her telling Jude?
4. Gwen, Brian, and Jude all take significant risks. What are those risks? Why do they take them?
5. On page 27, it is noted that “[P]harmaceutical promotion had more gray than a stormy sky.” Consider the moral dilemma that Brian faces while “promoting” Zuprone’s off-label use for weight loss. Does he feel responsible for the patients who developed anorexia? Should he?
6. Compare Gwen’s flirtations with Jude to Brian’s with Teresa. Do either of these flirtations pose a real threat to Brian and Gwen’s marriage? Do you agree with Gwen’s decision not to tell Brian about her kiss with Jude? Does a marriage need to have full, complete honesty in order for each spouse to maintain trust in the other?
7. What are Jude’s feelings about Dana going off to college? Does he always have his daughter’s best interests in mind? How would you describe their father/daughter relationship?
8. Jude is portrayed as having been very careful throughout his dealing career. What blinds him to the risks of the deal he is working on now?

9. What is the basis for attraction between Aaron and Dana? Is there anything positive about their brief time together?
10. Is Brian in a difficult situation at work because of his own decisions, or is he simply caught in the wrong place at the wrong time? Did he act in the best interest of his company, himself, or the consumers taking Zuprone?
11. Toward the end of the novel, Gwen reflects: “It didn’t seem stupid at the time, what she’d done; it didn’t seem lethal. Her behavior still fit within her moral compass: be responsible for your actions, be fair to everyone, keep your word.” Throughout the novel, does she stay true to her moral compass? Are there any times she goes off course?
12. What decision does Gwen make at the end of the novel? Does Gwen undergo any significant change?
13. What does the novel have to say about drug use? Does society view drug use differently, depending on whether the drug is legal or illegal? Do you think the author would support legalizing marijuana? Why or why not?
14. The novel is told from the viewpoints of different characters. What effect does this have on the building of suspense? On the pace of the novel?
15. “Stash” refers to something put away or hidden, often for future use. Could the title of the novel refer to anything other than drugs?