

Book Club Questions for Gone Tonight by Sarah Pekkanen

1. How did experiencing the story through both Ruth and Catherine's perspectives affect your emotional engagement with the characters? Can you imagine how the narrative might have differed if it had been told solely from one viewpoint?
2. Can you recall a specific moment in Ruth and Catherine's seemingly unbreakable bond that made you pause and rethink their relationship dynamics? Why did this moment resonate with you?
3. While reading about Ruth's past romance with James during her high school years, did it remind you of any significant memories from your own past? What did these glimpses into Ruth's history reveal about her character that intrigued you?
4. Reflecting on Ruth's decision to withhold the truth from Catherine, did you find yourself empathizing with her motivations, or did you have a different perspective? Have you ever faced a situation where you felt torn between honesty and protecting someone you care about?
5. The narrative style alternates between Catherine's and Ruth's viewpoints. Did you feel more aligned with one character's perspective over the other? How did this dual narrative enhance your reading experience?
6. Ruth's lies are a central element of the story. How did you react to her decision to keep such significant secrets from Catherine? Can you empathize with her motivations, or do you view her actions as selfish?
7. In chapter 30, Ruth reflects on her name change, mentioning, "*My birth name, Ava Morales, exuded grace and ethereality, as if meant for a ballerina. Ruth Sterling, in contrast, evoked an image of a resolute, unyielding woman, shouldering her burdens silently. These were qualities I yearned for. I aspired to embody Ruth Sterling in more ways than one.*" Have you ever associated certain traits with your own name or considered how your name shapes your identity?
8. The reviewers highlight the unique mother-daughter angle of the story. How does the exploration of this complex relationship set "Gone Tonight" apart from other thrillers you've read? Do you find the mother-daughter theme relatable?
9. When Ruth states, "*Vanishing is a skill I've mastered. As women, we excel at this art,*" did you find her observation relatable in any way? How do you see this idea of "vanishing" manifesting in today's society?

10. Were you surprised by Catherine's approach to handling the situation involving James? How did her actions make you reflect on the complexities of human emotions and relationships?
11. Exploring the theme of keeping secrets, can you think of a time when you felt the weight of safeguarding a secret to protect someone? How did this experience influence your understanding of the characters' choices in the story?
12. Did you have any suspicions about Ruth's involvement in Coach's death before it was revealed? How did your perception of her character evolve as more details emerged?
13. Reflect on the novel's portrayal of family dynamics. Did Ruth's reunion with her father and brother evoke any memories of your own family experiences? How did this aspect of the story contribute to your emotional connection with the characters?
14. Discuss your thoughts on the conclusion. Were there loose ends or unresolved questions that left you wanting more closure?
15. Considering the various reviews and perspectives shared, how would you personally rate "Gone Tonight" among other thrillers you've read? What aspects of the book stood out to you as particularly memorable or thought-provoking?