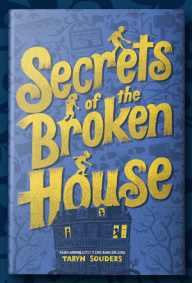
Secrets of the Broken House

Discussion Guide



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR *SECRETS OF THE BROKEN HOUSE*

1. Tucker Stephens is highly observant and good at drawing logical conclusions. Some of that probably has to do with the fact his dad is a detective and encourages him to use his skills. What traits, skills, or even fun quirks do you have that you think might have been influenced and/or encouraged by your family or those closest to you?

2. Clemmie Powell comes up with a great plan to help Tucker get a boat. Share a time you or a friend have had to "think outside the box" to solve a problem? What did you do and did your idea work?

3. Sadie Wells is about as opposite from Clemmie as possible. She loves drama and has a very active imagination, whereas Clemmie loves logic and sticks to the facts. Yet, they work well together. Do you have a friend who is totally opposite from you? In what way? Do you think it contributes to your friendship?

4. Tucker's dad says grief offers people two choices: "They either turn toward others, or they turn in on themselves, shutting everyone out and letting anger and sorrow destroy them from the inside." Do you think there are more than two choices? Think about how you've responded to sad events in your life. How did you cope? How do you think you can help someone who's dealing with grief?

5. Miss Rowena told Tucker that Miss Geraldine wasn't always so mean, but when her brother died, her world fell apart. She said, "It doesn't excuse her behavior, but it does explain it. And knowing why someone acts the way they do can help you decide the best way to respond." She also advised that listening could go a long way. Do you know someone who changed after something sad or unexpected happened? Do you think knowing why someone acts the way they do helps you show them more understanding or patience?

6. Tucker is mad at Aiden but hasn't talked to him about why. How has this affected Aiden's own attitude toward Tucker? How do you think you would respond if you were in a similar situation?

7. Do you think Aiden's solution of teaming up with Colin for the fishing contest was a good one? Do you think Tucker had a right to feel the way he did? If you were Aiden, would you have still given Tucker the fishing pole? Why or why not?

8. While helping out at Mama E's Salon, Tucker, Sadie, and Clemmie learn Mr. Linus saw Suzanne Bennett arriving at Geraldine Guss's house the evening she died. How do you think that made Sadie feel?

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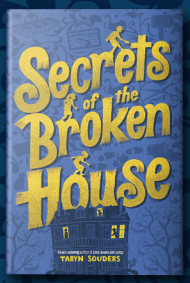

9. John and Thomas Seymour were real furniture makers back in the 1700s. Tucker was shocked to learn one of their pieces had sold at a recent auction for over $300,000 (You can read about that actual sale here.) Have you ever come across a family heirloom like furniture, jewelry, or something else that you didn't think had a lot of value, but later learned the opposite. And remember, sentimental value is just as special as monetary value!

10. Tucker wanted to discover the truth of what happened to Miss Geraldine for a couple of reasons. What were they?

11. Who was your favorite character and why?

12. A red herring is a false or misleading clue the author purposefully puts in a story to throw you (and the detective) off course and distract you. What were some of the red herrings you picked up on in this story?

13. What real clues did the author give Tucker to help identify the killer?

14. Why do you think Turtle felt it was okay for him to stage Miss Geraldine's death so it looked like an unfortunate fall down the stairs?

15. The death of Miss Geraldine was an accident, but accidents still have consequences. Is there a time you accidently caused a problem and then tried to cover it up? Did that make things better or worse? How did the "cover up" make you feel? Explain.

16. Miss Rowena said holding a grudge was like taking poison and expecting the other person to die. Later on, Tucker decided holding a grudge was like having a fouled anchor that needed to be cut loose. (If you're curious about fouled anchors, click here.) Have you ever held a grudge? What metaphor would you use to describe holding a grudge? How do you forgive someone?

17. Tucker named the rowboat Something's Fishy. Why do you think he chose that name? If you had a boat, what would you name it? Why?