

## [The Vanishing Half by Brit Bennett](#)

### Discussion Questions

1. Stella and Desiree grow up identical and inseparable. What are some of their differences that lead them to live such different lives? Why do you think Stella made such a significant decision to leave behind everything?
2. Compare and contrast the love relationships in the novel –Desiree and Early, Stella and Blake, and Reese and Jude. What are their separate relationships with the truth? How much does telling the truth or obscuring it play a part in the functionality of a relationship? How much does the past matter in each case?
3. How are different characters in this book dealing with the identities they've been given versus the identities they want for themselves?
4. Kennedy is born with everything handed to her, Jude with comparatively little. What impact do their relative privileges have on the people they become? How does it affect their relationships with their mothers and their understanding of home? How does it influence the dynamic between them?
5. What did you think about how the book jumps around in time? Did you enjoy this technique? Did you like reading about one era over another?
6. Did you have a favorite character? How about a least favorite character?
7. Consider the various forces that shape the twins into the people they become, and the forces that later shape their respective daughters. In the creation of an individual identity or sense of self, how much influence do you think comes from upbringing, geography, race, gender, class, education? Which of these are mutable and why? Have you ever taken on or discarded aspects of your own identity?

Themes to discuss: Colorism, Racism, Classism, Domestic Violence, Lying & Hiding, LGBTQIA+, Identity