

The Radiant Dark

OFFICIAL BOOK CLUB DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. In the book's opening pages, we see Carol struggle immensely with being a new mother. Why does she hide her feelings from those closest to her? How does her mental health postpartum set the stage for her decisions?
2. *The Radiant Dark* is simultaneously a speculative story about First Contact and a grounded family drama. What do you think about the interplay between those two kinds of stories?
3. What does each member of the Girard family want? How are their desires influenced by First Contact?
4. How does Michael's deep connection to the Earth manifest in his actions and attitudes?
5. Communication is a distinctive motif of this novel. Interrogate the ways in which the characters communicate with one another, how Earth communicates with the Other, and what the author is trying to communicate with the reader.
6. How does the dramatic graduation-party scene affect the characters closest to Elaine?
7. Compare the ways in which Michael and Ro have interpreted and navigated their shared childhood. How does the siblings' relationship evolve with time and age?
8. Compare Carol's spiritual journey with Ro's scientific one. How do their viewpoints diverge when considering intelligent extraterrestrial life? Are there any points on which they converge?
9. How does the family Ro establishes for herself—Charles and Lydia—differ from the family she had growing up? How is it similar?
10. Discuss the climactic scene with Theodore and Lydia. How does this incident and its aftermath impact other relationships?
11. In the epilogue, Mica observes the photograph of the Girards and remarks, "They look so happy, this perfect family standing in a loving cluster." Compare the photo as Mica sees it with what the author has revealed about the moment it was taken. What should we consider when thinking about personal history in the face of the universe and current events?

