

The Gallows of Dawn

BOOK CLUB DISCUSSION GUIDE | JOHN A. BORNOTY

Welcome to Positano

On Italy's Amalfi Coast, Jack Sullivan and Maria Morocco fall in love in a town where family names carry enormous power. Their relationship challenges expectations, loyalties, and the people determined to control their future. This guide is designed to spark conversation about love, justice, family, and the choices that shape our lives.

How to use this guide

Choose the questions that interest your group; there is no need to cover them all. Begin with the spoiler-free opening prompts if some members are still reading. The remaining questions discuss major events and the ending.

Start the conversation (minimal spoilers)

1. What first drew you into the story: the Positano setting, Jack and Maria's relationship, or the tension surrounding their families?
2. How does Positano function as more than a backdrop? How do its beauty, traditions, and social hierarchy shape the story?
3. The novel suggests that a family name can determine a person's opportunities. Where do you see that idea operating in the characters' lives?
4. Did your feelings about Jack or Maria change as the story developed? What moments influenced your view?

Love, loyalty & power (spoilers ahead)

5. Where is the line between protecting someone you love and controlling their life? Which character crosses it most clearly?
6. How do Maria's obligations to her family compete with her loyalty to Jack? What choices were genuinely available to her?
7. How do jealousy, reputation, and inherited privilege influence the actions of the people surrounding Jack and Maria?
8. Which character is most changed by love—or by the fear of losing power? What convinces you?

Justice, sacrifice & consequences

9. What does Jack's experience with the justice system suggest about the difference between the law and justice?
10. Which decision has the greatest unintended consequences? Could the outcome have changed if someone had acted differently?
11. What does the approach of dawn symbolize as the story reaches its climax?
12. How did you interpret the ending? Did it change the way you understood earlier choices or the novel's central idea of love?

Questions to take beyond the book

13. Can love overcome a system built to preserve power, or does it sometimes expose that system's limits?
 14. What does the novel suggest about forgiveness? Are there actions that love cannot excuse?
 15. If you could ask one character a single question after the final chapter, whom would you choose and what would you ask?
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Host an author conversation

Interested in inviting John A. Bornoty to join your book club, library program, or reader event? Visit thegallowsofdawn.com to learn more about the novel, watch the official trailer, and submit an author-event inquiry. In-person appearances depend on location and availability; virtual conversations may also be possible.

For bookstores and libraries: a downloadable title sell sheet with ISBN and wholesale ordering information is available on the website.