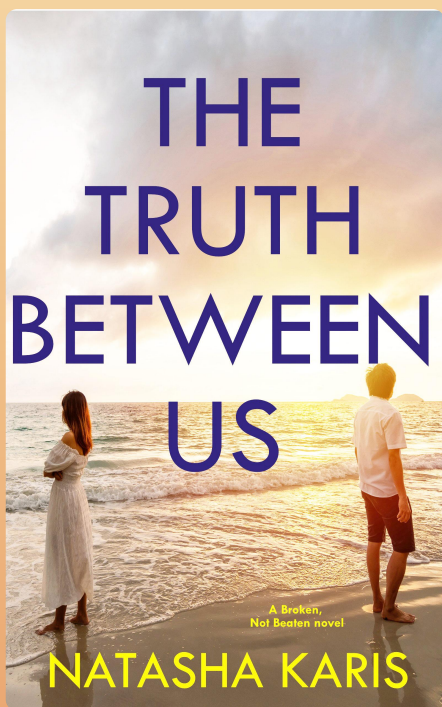




BOOK CLUB KIT

The Truth Between Us

NATASHA KARIS

A Broken, Not Beaten novel

Discussion Guide • 20 Questions

“A secret, so secret, no one noticed. Except me.”

KNOCKFARRAIG, CO. CORK • PAPHOS, CYPRUS

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

A note for whoever is hosting

Two things worth knowing before you open the discussion.

THIS GUIDE CONTAINS SPOILERS

Parts One and Two assume everyone has finished the book. Part Three, on page 6, discusses the ending directly and is marked. If someone in your group is still reading, stop at the end of page 5.

ON THE SUBJECT MATTER

This novel deals with domestic abuse, the loss of a baby, and terminal illness. It handles them honestly rather than sensationally — but the honesty is the point, and it lands hard.

In a group of eight women, the odds are that more than one has lived some version of what Adaline or Gloria survives. She may never have named it. You do not need to manage that, and you should not go looking for it. Three small things make a real difference:

- Say at the start that anyone can pass on any question, no explanation needed.
- Let the conversation stay about Adaline. People speak sideways, through a character, when they are not ready to speak directly — and that is a whole conversation in itself.
- Have the resources on the last page to hand. Not read aloud. Just there.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

There are more questions here than any group needs. Pick six or seven. The ones marked with a sun ☀ are the ones that reliably open a room. If your group likes to read aloud, page 7 has passages chosen for it, each with a single prompt.

THE BOOK

About The Truth Between Us

Adaline and Andrew once believed their love would last forever. Now they can't share a room for five minutes — and Adaline has quietly decided their marriage is over.

She books one last week away to be certain. To her shock, Andrew insists on coming. Seven days in Cyprus, and then she'll know whether to fight for him or leave for good and split their family in two. But a week beside the sea drags the past back up: the childhood she barely survived, the loss that broke them both, and the one thing she is certain Andrew did — and has never once asked him about.

Because the truth between them isn't the truth she thinks.

ABOUT NATASHA KARIS

Natasha Karis is an Irish author based in Cork. She writes contemporary, emotional women's fiction that dives into heavy subjects — grief, abuse, addiction — but leaves the reader with hope. Many of her novels are set in the fictional coastal town of Knockfarraig, inspired by Youghal, Co. Cork. She shares her writing life with three children, a cocker spaniel and her husband.

THE BROKEN, NOT BEATEN SERIES

Standalone stories of broken people finding hope again, set in the neighbouring Irish towns of Knockfarraig and Crookstown. They share a coastline and the occasional face, and can be read in any order.

Opening the conversation

The marriage, and the silence.

TO START

- 1 The novel opens with Adaline and Andrew boarding a plane in a silence they call “our preferred choice of conversation.” What did that first scene tell you to expect — and were you right?
- 2 Adaline admits the trip is really “final proof for the kids ... See? We tried.” Have you ever kept going with something just to prove you tried?
- 3 On the plane they compete over a paperback, a glass of wine, a window seat. Which of their small power games felt most uncomfortably familiar?

THE MARRIAGE, AND THE SILENCE

- 4 ☀ For almost the whole novel Adaline is certain she knows why her marriage failed. She is wrong. How did you feel when you realised she had never once asked Andrew the question?
- 5 Adaline and Andrew stop fighting long before they stop loving each other. Is silence more dangerous to a marriage than conflict?
- 6 ☀ Humphrey tells Adaline, “You can’t be unhappy and grateful at the same time.” Did you accept that — is gratitude a choice, or a feeling you can’t force?
- 7 The couple slip into “roles” — the nag, the provider, the peacekeeper. Where did you watch a role harden into a wall? Do all long relationships do this?

The past that shaped them

Two childhoods, two fathers, and what gets carried forward.

ADALINE'S FAMILY

- 8 Adaline grows up watching her mother, Gloria, absorb her father's violence and stay. As an adult she swears she is nothing like her mother. Is she right?
- 9 ☀ Gloria chooses how she dies rather than how long she lives. Was that a defeat, or the first free decision of her life?
- 10 Nana arrives only once Declan has fled, and dies soon after. What did she give Adaline in that short window — and why do you think the shock is enough to kill her?

ANDREW, AND GRIEF

- 11 Andrew and Adaline discover they had “the same type of father.” Does sharing that wound draw them together, or quietly set a trap for them?
- 12 ☀ As a boy, Andrew holds a screwdriver to his sleeping father's throat and waits for “a sign.” What did that memory change about how you saw the grown man?
- 13 Adaline carries Adam with her — a lock of hair, a belief that “a piece of him stayed behind.” Did the novel's handling of losing a baby ring true to you?
- 14 After Adam, Adaline and Andrew grieve in completely different ways, and it nearly finishes them. Whose grief did you find easier to understand?

DISCUSSION • PART THREE

The ending

Do not open this page until everyone has finished the book.

- 15 ☀ The whole tragedy turns on one thing Adaline saw and never questioned. Does the novel let her off for assuming the worst of Andrew — and should it?
- 16 When the truth about Maria and Donald surfaces, Adaline says she has been looking at her marriage “through a distorted mirror.” Have you ever been certain of something that turned out to be untrue?
- 17 It takes a panic attack on a cliff road — a moment she thinks she is dying — for Adaline to realise she wants to live. Why does it take so much to reach her?
- 18 ☀ At the end, a swallow settles in the church and Adaline whispers, “Hello Adam.” Did you read the bird as a sign, a coincidence — or does the difference not matter?
- 19 The title cuts two ways: the truth that divides them, and the truth that finally passes between them. Which meaning did you land on?
- 20 Adaline gets the reconciliation Gloria never did. Is the novel saying some marriages are worth saving — or only that this one was?

Four passages, four questions

“Noise can distract from unwelcome issues, I’ve learnt.”

ASK: WHAT NOISE DO WE USE TO AVOID THE QUIET?

“The traits you fall for in a person can be the very things you learn to hate.”

ASK: HAVE YOU FOUND THIS TRUE — AND DOES IT REVERSE AGAIN WITH TIME?

“You can’t be unhappy and grateful at the same time.”

ASK: IS IT REALLY THAT SIMPLE?

“I walked out of that church ... a dead child lighter.”

ASK: WHAT DOES ADALINE FINALLY PUT DOWN — AND WHAT DOES SHE KEEP?

IF YOUR GROUP LIKES TO THEME IT

- **Meze by the sea.** Adaline and Andrew find their way back to each other over Cypriot food — halloumi and lountza, stifado, koupepia. Lay out a simple meze and a bottle of Cypriot wine.
- **A taste of Knockfarraig.** For the Irish half of the story, a pot of tea and warm brown bread. Barry’s or Lyons — let people take sides.
- **The sea.** Knockfarraig is Youghal, Co. Cork; the holiday is Paphos, Cyprus. Worth two minutes looking both up together — and, if you can, timing the evening to end on a sunset.

IF ANY OF THIS WAS CLOSE TO HOME

Support

You do not have to be sure. You do not have to have a plan. You only have to tell one person.

DOMESTIC ABUSE

Ireland — Women's Aid, 1800 341 900, 24 hours · womensaid.ie

United Kingdom — National Domestic Abuse Helpline, 0808 2000 247, 24 hours

United States — National Domestic Violence Hotline, 1-800-799-7233

BABY LOSS & BEREAVEMENT

Ireland — Féileacáin, stillbirth & neonatal death support · feileacain.ie

United Kingdom — Sands, 0808 164 3332 · sands.org.uk

United States — Star Legacy Foundation · starlegacyfoundation.org

If you are outside these countries, findahelpline.com will point you to a service near you.

MORE FROM NATASHA KARIS

The Broken, Not Beaten series — standalone stories of broken people finding hope again, set in Knockfarraig and Crookstown. Books 1–4 are available together in one box set.

Homeward Bound — an exclusive companion novella. The holiday is over, but the story isn't: follow Adaline home to Ireland and the aftermath of the choices she made in Cyprus. Free to newsletter subscribers.

Meet the author. Natasha is happy to join book clubs by video call where she can. Get in touch through natashakarisbooks.com and say when you are meeting.

If the book was worth the evening. Reviews are how stories like this one find the readers who need them. A single sentence on Amazon or Goodreads makes a real difference — and a book club leaving several at once makes more.

This kit may be freely printed and shared for book club and library use.
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