



The Book of Two Ways

Questions and topics for discussion

1. The book asks the question: “Who would you be, if you hadn’t turned out to be the person you are right now?” If you had to pinpoint the one person or thing you left behind, what would it be? Do you wonder What if? How might your life be different if you had taken that different route?
2. Had you ever heard of a death doula before reading *The Book of Two Ways*? What did you think of this care practice and the way it is incorporated in the novel?
3. Both Egyptian mythology and quantum physics are explored in the book, and they are often presented as two opposites in Dawn’s life. Do you think these topics are as different as Dawn perceives them to be, or are there ways in which these concepts actually overlap?
4. In what ways do Dawn’s two potential careers mirror each other?
5. Do you think Dawn’s decision not to return to Egypt after her mother passes away is ultimately and selfish or a selfless choice?

6. Dawn and her daughter, Meret, have a close but challenging relationship. What do you think causes them to clash so often? What do they learn from one another by the end of the book?
7. Picoult plays with the idea of parallel universes and alternate timelines as we see Dawn's narrative unravel in both Boston and in Egypt. Were you surprised when it became clear which timeline Dawn truly exists in?
8. What responsibility do you think Brian and Wyatt each hold in how Dawn's path in life progressed?
9. Do you think it's possible to experience multiple loves, as Dawn and Win both describe?
10. What did you think of Dawn's decision to deliver Win's painting to Thane Bernard?
11. The novel also explores the concept of fate versus free will. Do you think we determine our own destiny through our choices, or are we always heading toward the same fate no matter which path we take to get there (as the Book of Two Ways suggests)?
12. If you were in Dawn's shoes would you choose to stay with Brian or to pursue a life with Wyatt? Alternatively, is there another path you would take instead?
13. What do you think makes for a good legacy? Are certain things—like one's career, contributions to science or culture, or family—weighed more heavily than others when considering what constitutes a “good life?”