

### Discussion Questions for *Mortal Fall*:

1. In *Mortal Fall*, Monty's main haunting conflicts turn out to be his brother, circumstances from his childhood, and his failing marriage. Do you feel that Monty handles these conflicts well or struggles to maintain his controlled, orderly ways?
2. How does the quote the author selected to place at the beginning color the reader's perception of Monty? Does he seem different or changed by the end of the book?
3. *Mortal Fall* deals with a fictional wilderness school for troubled teens. We have many such schools in the west. A romantic notion about the west persists, that perhaps stems from manifest destiny, that we can solve psychological issues with fresh air, the ruggedness of the wild and a nice mountain view the way we thought agriculture and mining could solve many of the nation's problems of poverty and unemployment characteristic of the big cities in the east in the nineteenth century: "Go west, young man." It's almost as if the very fact that a therapeutic school is located in the west gives the institution credibility. Many are effective, good institutions, but some of these wilderness therapy schools are unregulated and are not places you'd want to send your children. What do you think about parents sending their teens away to therapeutic schools in the first place? How did you feel about Adam in general? Did you feel differently about him after understanding more of his history and his situation at the fictional Glacier Academy? By the end of the book, do Monty's emotions regarding his brother change? If so, how?
4. Monty's conflict with Lara and his unwavering position to not have a biological family might make some feel like he is inflexible and too rigid. Lara has said that she doesn't want to adopt, so they end up not being able to find a workable solution. Do you think it was understandable on his part or were you angry at him? How did you feel about her? Did you sympathize with Monty or Lara more?

5. Sometimes all it takes is one tragedy to spur on other painful tragedies and circumstances. In how many ways has the cruelty of one human being like Mark Phillips reverberated outward and affected other lives?
6. Does the ending of the book work for you? Would you have liked to see it resolved differently?
7. Were you surprised when you discovered who was responsible for Wolfie's and Mark Phillips' deaths? Did you empathize with the perpetrator at all?
8. Were you disappointed that the Nathan Faraway mystery was not solved? (If so, stay tuned for Book 3, The Weight of Night. 😊)