

Defending Jacob ~ William Landay

Page Turners Meeting - June 14, 2016 @ 6:30

Discussion Questions:

1. *Defending Jacob* explores the emerging science of behavioral genetics and **neurocriminology** — the notion that, as a predictor of criminal behavior, nature may indeed be as significant as nurture. Are we products of our environments or do genetics influence our personality and our actions?
2. Why did Andy choose not to share his family history with Laurie? Did this impact the decisions she made both as a wife and mother?
3. How would you have handled this situation if you were Andy? Would you make the same choices he made?
4. Can parents ever be completely objective and unbiased about their children's actions and choices? How far would you go to protect your child or grandchild?
5. Is Andy a good father? Did Andy believe in Jacob's innocence? Was his interference in the case justified?
6. Is Jacob a product of his upbringing? Do you think he is he a violent person because his environment makes him violent, or do you think he has violent inclinations since birth?
7. Bullying is such a hot topic in today's media. How did the author incorporate it into the story, and do you think its role had anything to do with Jacob's disposition? Can adolescent bullying be completely stopped?
8. What role did Jacob's age play in this story? If Jacob were seventeen, would you view him differently? What about nine?
9. Do you think Neal Logiudice acts ethically in this novel? What about Andy? What about Laurie?
10. Who or what do you think was really on trial? What was the most damning piece of evidence against Jacob? Was there anything that you felt exonerated him?
11. If Jacob hadn't been accused, how do you think his life would have turned out? What kind of a man do you think he would grow up to be?

JOTTINGS...