

HUSH LITTLE BABY

Discussion Questions

1. Consider Jillian as a mother. Did you think she was a good mother? Did you sympathize with her? How about at the start of the story? At what point did your sympathies begin to change (if they did)? Do you think most mothers compare themselves to other mothers and worry about inadequacy? Is this more common among working mothers?
2. How do you think the marriage appeared from the outside? How do you think the world perceived Jillian? Gordon? Do you think all of us portray an external image different from the reality behind closed doors? If so, how did this story make you feel about that?
3. What do you think would have happened had Jillian stayed in the marriage? Do you think she left primarily because she was scared, because he destroyed the statues, because Drew was becoming aware of the abuse, or because Gordon wanted to borrow money from her retirement fund?
4. Did you sympathize with Gordon at all? Had he married a different woman, do you think he might have been different?
5. How did you feel about the incident of Drew torturing the toad? Why do you think he did it? Do you think he did it to test Jillian as a mother to see if she would protect him or because he was starting to be like his father? Do you think Jillian handled it correctly?
6. Jillian had an affair with Jeffrey. Did you sympathize with this or find it reprehensible?
7. Do you believe Gordon killed Jeffrey based on the circumstantial evidence (Gordon having said "Shotgun deaths are brutal," and him using Jillian's name when she confronted him with the accusation)? What if it turned out Gordon didn't actually kill Jeffrey? Would that change your perception of everything that happened after?
8. Do you blame Jillian for Jeffrey's death? Do you think she irresponsibly put him in danger? How do you feel about her not reporting his death or telling the police her suspicions?
9. The wedding ring Gordon gave Jillian turned out to be a fake. Do you think his love was as well? Always? Why do you think they got married in the first place?
10. Paul and Gordon were opposing forces, one a convicted criminal, the other a cop, one controlling, the other not. How did Jillian's time with Paul change her and make her more capable of dealing with her issues?
11. When Jillian was at the Flying Goat, she was a fish out of water. Do you think she could have ultimately been happy there?
12. How do you feel about Jillian getting pregnant by Jeffrey, then keeping the baby to protect herself, knowing she couldn't provide a good life for it? How do you feel about her not telling Gordon the baby wasn't his, knowing the baby was in danger and that Gordon was going to come for it?
13. Had Addie not gotten sick, how do you think the story might have played out?
14. In what way did Jillian's parents contribute to her staying in her marriage? Do you think she made the right choice returning to Gordon after she left the first time? Do you think she should

have returned to live with her parents when she came back from Washington, knowing this put them in danger?

15. Sherman McGregor was a mentor to Jillian. Do you think his story was a cautionary tale that relates to Jillian's choices? If so, how?
16. How did you feel about Claudia? Did you have sympathy for her? Do you think Jillian should have had sympathy for her?
17. William Blake's poem, *Tiger! Tiger!* was mentioned as well as Aesop's fable. How do you think these stories foreshadowed Jillian's own fate?
18. An underlying theme of the story is whether good and evil exist in each of us. Do you believe evil exists only in some or that it exists in everyone and is revealed based on circumstance?
19. Jillian decided not to kill Gordon in the hospital where Addie was being treated realizing that was not the way to fix things, but ultimately she shot him in the end. Does this mean evil prevailed or was she justified in killing him? Would your opinion change had Gordon not shielded the baby and the baby died instead of Gordon?
20. How did Jillian's character evolve throughout the story? Do you think her values changed, her perspective?
21. Who was your favorite character? Why?
22. Movie time: Who would you like to see play each part?