STAY Book Club Questions

1. In this book the author highlights how a single choice can alter the path of one’s life. How might Lucas’s life have been different had he not chosen to take a shortcut through the woods and encountered two strange dogs?

In the face of life-threatening circumstances in Vietnam, Roy makes a choice that ensures he will be sent home. How does this action, coupled with keeping the truth a secret, affect his life going forward?

As a boy growing up, starting at a young age, Lucas felt responsible for everyone and everything. In what ways did his family dynamics play into this type of behavior?

In contrast, his best friend, Connor, chose a completely different way to cope, leading nearly to a tragic end. What was missing in both boys’ homelife? How did meeting Zoe help fill that void for both of them?

For many years, Zoe has carried the guilt of being responsible for the death of two young children. Do you think one can ever make amends for something so heartbreaking? Ultimately, how did this tragedy shape her to become the person Lucas and Connor come to rely on?

Lucas interprets the dogs’ expressions about Zoe to mean: “Well, we all know how she is, don’t we? We know how she can be, but we love her all the same.” He goes on to observe “that’s what you really do get from dogs.” What do you think the author was trying to convey in this passage?

During the second part of the book, it is revealed that Lucas felt so strongly about his conviction not to fight in the Vietnam War, he chose instead to go to prison. This was a brave choice during those turbulent times. Was his decision worth the consequences?

At the end of Lucas’s retelling of his life, Harris says, “everyone dies in your story.” Lucas replies, “But I still have to say it’s not devastating that people and animals live and then die . . . It’s hard, but those are the rules of the game.” And then he thinks, “If you think having and losing is so bad, try never having. Now that’s devastating.” Do you agree or disagree with Lucas’s philosophy on life?