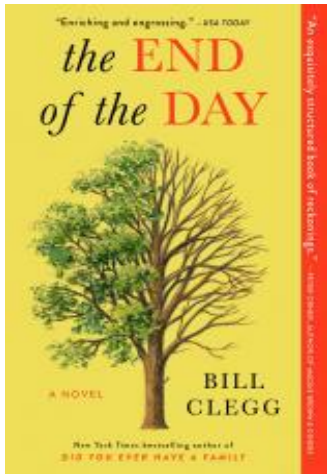


The End of the Day

by Bill Clegg



About the Book

Following his acclaimed *New York Times* bestseller, **DID YOU EVER HAVE A FAMILY**, Bill Clegg returns with a deeply moving, emotionally resonant second novel about the complicated bonds and breaking points of friendship, the corrosive forces of secrets, the heartbeat of longing, and the redemption found in forgiveness.

A retired widow in rural Connecticut wakes to an unexpected visit from her childhood best friend whom she hasn't seen in 49 years.

A man arrives at a Pennsylvania hotel to introduce his estranged father to his newborn daughter and finds him collapsed on the floor of the lobby.

A 67-year-old taxi driver in Kauai receives a phone call from the mainland that jars her back to a traumatic past.

These seemingly disconnected lives come together as half-century-old secrets begin to surface. It is in this moment that Bill Clegg reminds us how choices --- to connect, to betray, to protect --- become our legacy.

Deeply observed and beautifully written, this novel is a feat of storytelling, capturing 60 years within the framework of one fateful day.

Discussion Guide

1. THE END OF THE DAY is told through many different perspectives: Dana, Jackie, Lupita, Floyd, Alice and Hap. Whose voice did you most identify with and why? Did your opinion of any of the characters change throughout the story?

2. When we first meet Dana, she is annoyed by her staff, most particularly by a woman named Marcella, whom she describes as patronizing. Do you think she is? Why do you think Marcella has to approach Dana in this way?
3. Edgewater is described in many different ways throughout the book, both as a crumbling home with only one tenant and a grand estate. Discuss how the house mirrors the characters' own personal lives throughout the novel.
4. Jackie's mother says about Dana and her family that "Those people?they don't treat people the way we do" (pg. 20). Jackie shares this with Dana while mocking her mom, though she admits that it's partially true. What do you think Jackie's mother meant by that? Do you think she knew more information about the Goss family than she lets on?
5. Why do you think it took Hap until his father's death to realize that his family was hiding something? What do you think he did with all the information that Dana tells him?
6. Hap and Gene are childhood friends, who have grown apart. "No longer playing any of the important roles he'd played since they were boys --- trusted ally, fierce rival, finisher of sentences, co-creator of secret languages, relentless corruptor, conscience, confessor, penitent, defender, witness, brother" (pg. 133). Why do you think Hap feels loyalty to continue to be friends with Gene? Compare the friendship between Hap and Gene with the friendship between Dana and Jackie.
7. Lupita finds freedom in the feeling of driving Dana's yellow convertible and even wearing Dana's clothes without her knowledge. What do you think Lupita found in this experience? How does her relationship change with Dana's possessions (the car, robe and her room) throughout the book?
8. When Jackie is reflecting on why she didn't confront Dana when they were young, she considers the tenuousness of friendships. "No lawyer or judge, mediator or priest needed. Not to make it, nor to unmake it, which requires even less. To end a friendship, it just takes someone willing to throw it away" (pg. 211). What do you think of Jackie's perspective on friendship? Do you think Jackie and Dana would have remained friends if Floyd hadn't come between them?
9. Later when Jackie confronts Dana years later, Dana doesn't correct Jackie's belief that she slept with Floyd. Dana states, "You're right?I was jealous. And angry?I loved you?" (pg 256). Why do you think Dana doesn't mention Lupita?
10. Dana keeps Lupita's secret from her best friend. Why do you think Dana remained loyal to Lupita? Do you think she had an ulterior motive or was protecting her friend? Why do you think Dana invited Lupita to her Fourth of July picnic?
11. Why do you think Clegg chose to end the story on Lupita's perspective? What do you think the ship that Lupita finally boards means? Who do you imagine is beside her?
12. The story weaves together characters from very different backgrounds whose lives overlap in various ways. What choices do you think unite characters who are otherwise very dissimilar? Which pairing of characters surprised you most?

Author Bio

Bill Clegg is a literary agent in New York and the author of the bestselling memoirs *PORTRAIT OF AN ADDICT AS A YOUNG MAN* and *NINETY DAYS*. The author of the novels *DID YOU EVER HAVE A FAMILY* and *THE END OF THE DAY*, he has written for the *New York Times*, *Lapham's Quarterly*, *New York* magazine, *The Guardian* and *Harper's Bazaar*.

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