ReadingGroupGuides
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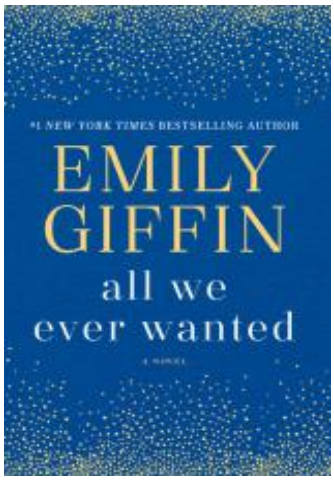
All We Ever Wanted

by Emily Giffin



About the Book

In this riveting novel from the #1 bestselling author of SOMETHING BORROWED and FIRST COMES LOVE, three very different people must choose between their families and their most deeply held values.

Nina Browning is living the good life after marrying into Nashville?s elite. More recently, her husband made a fortune selling his tech business, and their adored son has been accepted to Princeton.

Yet sometimes the middle-class small-town girl in Nina wonders if she?s strayed from the person she once was.

Tom Volpe is a single dad working multiple jobs while struggling to raise his headstrong daughter, Lyla. His road has been lonely, long and hard, but he finally starts to relax after Lyla earns a scholarship to Windsor Academy, Nashville?s most prestigious private school.

Amid so much wealth and privilege, Lyla doesn?t always fit in --- and her overprotective father doesn?t help --- but in most ways, she?s a typical teenaged girl, happy and thriving.

Then, one photograph, snapped in a drunken moment at a party, changes everything. As the image spreads like wildfire, the Windsor community is instantly polarized, buzzing with controversy and assigning blame.

At the heart of the lies and scandal, Tom, Nina and Lyla are forced together --- all questioning their closest relationships, asking themselves who they really are, and searching for the courage to live a life of true meaning.

Discussion Guide

1. Discuss the title, "All We Ever Wanted." How do you think it relates to the overall story? How does it apply to each of

the characters in the book?

2. Both Nina and Kirk have very different ideas about what the ?right path? is for Finch. How do you think each parent justifies their actions?

3. Tom is furious about the transgression against his daughter, and believes she deserves justice. How do Tom?s responsibilities as a parent come into conflict with the ethics of respecting Lyla?s wishes?

4. As the book progresses, Nina finds herself siding with Tom?s values rather than her husband?s. Do you feel that Nina is betraying her family by aligning with Tom? Is she betraying herself if she does not stick to her beliefs? Whom does she owe her loyalty to more?

5. In chapter 11, Melanie tells Nina that it?s a mother?s responsibility to stand by her child ?no matter what.? Do you agree with this assertion?

6. Why do you think Lyla is so willing to trust and even begin dating Finch? As you were reading, did you believe Finch?s claim that Polly stole his phone and took the picture of Lyla? If so, was there a point at which you began to doubt Finch?

7. Discuss the ways in which Tom?s and Nina?s pasts inform the way they live their lives in the present. Do you believe they were/are living their best lives?

8. This book poses the question of what lengths one should go to in order to protect one?s family versus preserve one?s values. What would you have done in Nina?s position? In Tom?s?

9. In the epilogue, Lyla tells Finch that Nina ?saved? them both. What do you think she means? Do you believe this is an accurate statement?

10. If you could write subsequent chapters for this book, how do you imagine the relationship between Tom, Nina, Lyla, Finch and Kirk playing out?

Author Bio

Emily Giffin is the bestselling author of 13 novels: SOMETHING BORROWED, SOMETHING BLUE, BABY PROOF, LOVE THE ONE YOU'RE WITH, HEART OF THE MATTER, WHERE WE BELONG, THE ONE & ONLY, FIRST COMES LOVE, ALL WE EVER WANTED, THE LIES THAT BIND, MEANT TO BE, THE SUMMER PACT and LOVE YOU MORE. She lives in Atlanta with her family and two dogs.

Critical Praise

?Giffin is a worldwide best-selling author because she gets under your skin --- by creating relatable characters wrestling

within believable situations.... Giffin crafts an unpredictable page-turner that unfolds in the voices of three superbly distinct characters... Her latest...is destined for greatness.?

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