



Book Club Discussion Questions

For *Kernel of Doubt* (A Neela Durante Mystery) by Hillary Avis

1. Neela Durante works in the world of corporate agriculture developing GMO crops, yet her family owns a small organic farm. How do you think she reconciles these two worlds that seem at odds?
2. Did the romantic storyline in *Kernel of Doubt* add to or detract from the mystery? Did the characters end up with the right partners in the end, or did you have hopes they would choose someone else?
3. Molly the beagle plays a pivotal role in the book as the link between Neela and her estranged husband. Does Neela do the right thing when she changes their dog custody arrangement? What is the right approach to joint pet ownership after a breakup or divorce?
4. While the central mystery in the book is solved, some questions remain unanswered at the end of the book. Which are you most curious about and why?
5. What professional barriers does Neela face as a woman and person of color working in science? Do you think she is treated fairly or unfairly by her boss and colleagues?
6. The relationships between the five Quiñones sisters are both loving and fraught, and that includes how the sisters relate to each other's partners. What do the sisters think of Rick and Teo? Why are their opinions different?
7. The book is told from Neela's point of view. How would the story differ if it were told by another character? Whose point of view would you be most interested in seeing and why?
8. Neela views herself as an outsider both at home and at work. Why do you think that is? Do others view her the same way?
9. Neela's mother finds an old recipe card that is a link between the farm's past and future. Has your family passed down traditions from generation to generation?
10. *Kernel of Doubt* shows both traditional and modern approaches to agriculture. How do you envision the future of farming in your state or country?