

The Darlings - Discussion Questions

1. Explain the line, "The Darlings were people of privilege, and people of privilege was what they would remain, no matter what the cost." What are the must haves or must dos for people like the Darlings? Which parts of their life sound alluring, and which do not?
2. Paul feels somewhat trapped in the life he thought he wanted when he married Merrill. In what ways has marrying into the Darling family been a blessing and a curse?
3. Describe the relationship - professional and social - between Duncan and Marina. How is it mutually beneficial? How does their relationship change over the course of the novel?
4. Ines fears being ostracized after the scandal: "She would make a lifetime of avoiding the people she had once worked so hard to befriend." Are her fears well founded? Did she have any inkling what her husband was up to? What could she have done to stop things from getting out of hand?
5. Who is the hero in this novel, and why?
6. Ines has long decided that Merrill is smart and Lily is pretty. How has this determination affected each daughter's life? Compare their reactions to the family's crisis.
7. Why do we love watching wealthy or powerful people fall from grace? Where is media coverage helpful in scandals like this, and where is it harmful?
8. Yvonne says, "They were willing to sell out family to save themselves." What do you think of her sentiment? Would your opinion change if Paul had not been implicated and someone else took the fall? What were her motives for giving information?
9. Denial runs through The Darlings. Identify places where characters hide problems versus address them head on. How do the outcomes differ?
10. How might Carter's and Ines's descriptions of their marriage differ? Besides providing for her daughters, what other reasons might have kept Ines in a failed marriage?
11. When Marina finally gets a chance to be a journalist, she finds new purpose. Which other characters might have benefited from meaningful work? Who are the hardest workers in the story?