THE CONNECTION IN EVERYTHING

Book Club Discussion & Event Guide

Setting the Mood for Your Gathering

Think about setting the mood for your book club to honor and celebrate Am. In the true spirit of Italian culture, good food, good drink, and good company are always the best ways to bring people together and facilitate connections.

- **A Homemade Feast:** Celebrate Am's learning to cook by making and serving a vegetable frittata like the one David taught him to make, and an Italian Love Cake like the one he made with G.
- **Simple & Relaxed:** Keep it easy with your favorite pizza alongside a good Italian red wine, such as a Chianti, Super Tuscan, or Amarone.
- **A Porch Classic:** Serve fresh lemonade, a wonderful nod to the quiet afternoons Am shared on the front porch with his mom and Nona.
- **A Sweet Finish:** Offer cannolis for dessert—a favorite Italian treat that Am truly loved.

Discussion Questions

1. What did you think of the book? The author touched on many topics in this book: the loneliness that can come to children who are different from the norm, parental abuse, secrets and deceptions, families and chosen family, friendships, and young adults coming into their own and making their own life choices. What pulled on you the most?

2. One of the hardest storylines in the book is in regards to Ernesto's abusive behavior toward Am. Why do you think Ernesto was so hard on Am, a brilliant and gifted child who loved his family and had a bright future ahead of him? Ernesto had what appeared to be a good relationship with Am's brother DP, and no issues noted with his youngest sister Iaia. Although everyone said Lulu was dad's favorite, Ernesto had a disturbing and dangerous hold over Lulu. Why do you think Ernesto was so different in his nature and approach with his older children vs the younger ones?

3. What were your thoughts on Am's mom and Nona? Clearly they loved him and he loved them. Yet, when the beatings took place, they did not step in, they did not stop the beatings, they did not call the police nor take Am to the hospital. Why do you think that was?

4. Why do you think Am refused to press charges against his dad? Was it just about the 'Marzano' rule or was there more to it?

5. In the end, do you think David made the right choice by leaving without saying goodbye, or should he have stayed and told Am the truth? Was Am better off not knowing David's truth or would it have been better for Am to have heard the truth from David and why?

6. Am had a focus on finding and defining the connections in everything. As he was developing his book, he defined The Connection in Everything (TCIE) as:

> *"TCIE is about accepting that no action, no life, exists in a vacuum. It's accepting that suffering that happens far away from us touches all of us, that there is no other, no us versus them. It's accepting that we have the responsibility to mend our fractured world and pull it together, maybe for the first time. I guess I've come to believe the connection in everything should be our underlying operating system, the way we move holistically, the way we build trust and truth together."*

Does this resonate with you? How? If not, why?

7. In the book Am meets David and finds a near instant connection with him, and a strong desire to follow it despite the initial concerns of his friends, Jessica and Sam. He also sees G perform and determines he must find her and meet her. Once he finds her, and they have their first time alone together as he walks her home one night they seem to form a solid connection. Wonderful, especially for a lonely boy with few connections. Have you ever experienced this with another person? Meeting someone that you almost immediately felt they were someone you are meant to connect with, someone meant to be in your life?

8. What do you hope for Am and his future?

9. How has this book impacted you? What will you take away from it?