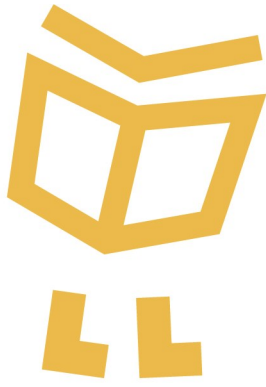


# BOOK CLUB in a bag

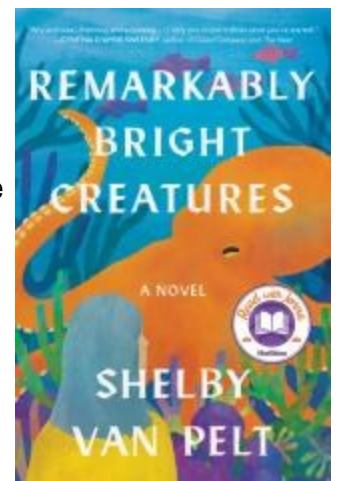


## Remarkably Bright Creatures

Shelby Van Pelt

### Discussion Questions

1. What kind of person do you think Marcellus would be if he were human? What qualities do Marcellus and Tova both share that make this remarkable friendship a success?
2. Each of these characters --- animal and human --- need each other in a specific way, even if they don't realize this at first. What qualities bind these characters to each other? Are they connected by loss, grief or something else?
3. In contrast to how Tova keeps busy, Cameron emerges as a character who deals with grief by remaining stagnant, refusing to even try to reach his potential, much to the frustration of those who care about him. Why do you think he sabotages himself? Have you ever had someone like this in your life?
4. Marcellus is extremely smart --- smarter than any human he encounters. Have you had encounters with animals --- octopuses or otherwise --- who demonstrated surprising levels of intelligence, emotional or otherwise? Have you felt "seen" by an animal or felt a relationship with an animal deepen upon earning their trust?
5. REMARKABLY BRIGHT CREATURES takes place in a Pacific Northwest coastal town in the recent past. The watery Puget Sound setting plays a major role in the plot, but how else does the setting inform the novel? How do you think the novel would be different if it were set somewhere like Arizona or Minnesota?
6. Marcellus remarks on page 59 that "fingerprints are like keys, with their specific shape. I remember all keys, too." From the house key Tova loses to the ring of keys Marcellus finds at the bottom of the sea, the novel is filled with various types of keys. What do you think keys symbolize in this novel?
7. Tova reflects on her experience caring for her husband through his illness and eventual passing, and with no surviving family to do the same for her, she worries about being a burden on her friends as she ages. How do you view the role of community and family in caring for older people? How did Tova's views on this change throughout the book, and why do you think they did?
8. This novel explores different characters who are faced with major choices: they can open themselves up to something new and take an unexpected, daring opportunity, or they can continue on as they have been. Have you ever faced a moment in your life where a critical choice could change everything? Did you take the leap or not?
9. In the last few pages of the novel, Tova and Cameron realize how they are truly connected. What do you imagine they are doing a year from the novel's end?



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## About the Author

Born and raised in the Pacific Northwest, Shelby Van Pelt lives in the suburbs of Chicago with her family. *REMARKABLY BRIGHT CREATURES* is her first novel.

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