



# Under the Magnolias

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## Tome Society It List Discussion Guide



### Pre-reading questions

1. One of the themes of this book is family loyalty. Have you read any other books that have a similar theme? What are your predictions for how this theme will play out in the book?
2. This book follows the main character, Austin, from early teenage years into young adulthood. Do you think you will like this timeline and following a character for many years?
3. The Foster family has 7 children. Do you enjoy reading books about large families? What are your predictions about the family dynamic based on the description of the book?

### Post-reading questions

1. *Under the Magnolias* is full of colorful characters. Who were your favorite characters and least favorite characters? Why?
2. What flaws did you recognize in Austin? How did she change as the book progressed? Did she overcome her flaws or did they help her in some way?
3. What lessons did Austin learn in the story?
4. This book deals heavily with Austin's father's mental health condition. Do you feel like Austin made good choices in regards to her father's mental health? Did you recognize that something was wrong before it was specifically revealed?
5. Discuss Dave Foster's quote from the prologue: "Fighting hate with hate will only produce more hate." Do you think this is true? Why or why not?
6. This book is set in the 1980s in South Carolina. Most of the attendees of Mr. Foster's church were considered "outcasts" by the rest of the town. Do you think they would be treated the same if the book was set in 2023? Why or why not?
7. Which "chapter" of Austin's life was your favorite to read or the one you related to the most? Why?
8. Discuss the title of the last chapter: "Healing Ever After." What do you think of this title vs. "Happily Ever After"? How do you see this healing in Austin and her family's lives?

### Post-reading activities

1. *Under the Magnolias* deals significantly with Austin's father's mental health condition. Mental health awareness is often under-represented, especially amongst teenagers. Create an infographic to help raise awareness about mental health. Follow the guidelines at [tomesociety.org/competitions](http://tomesociety.org/competitions) and enter your final product into the Infographic competition.
2. This year's theme is "Brave on Purpose." Write an essay about how *Under the Magnolias* relates to this theme. Submit your final work to the Theme Essay competition.
3. Create a Like-Try-Why social media post for *Under the Magnolias*. Follow the guidelines and submit your final product to the Like-Try-Why competition.

### More About This Book

Author's Website: [www.tilowe.com](http://www.tilowe.com) Publisher's Discussion Guide: p. 359-360 in back of book.