

Familia by Lauren E. Rico Discussion Questions

1. The themes of penance and redemption are present in the lives of several of the characters, Isabella, Coqui, Alberto, and Beatriz. In your opinion, is redemption truly possible? Or do our actions define us for the entirety of our lives? How does this book, and its character's experiences, support that argument?
2. The role and definition of family varies for the characters in this book. How did Coquí, Lucy and Mack, and Isabella come to find "family" outside of blood relations? Were there particular moments that you found real life parallels to?
3. Some of the characters were forced into actions they never would have considered under normal circumstances, and the motto of 'ends justifying the means' was a rationale for some character's actions. How did the ends justify the means for Coquí, Beatriz, and Alberto? What would you have done differently in any of their shoes? Have you ever felt forced to make a decision you would be uncomfortable with under any other circumstances?
4. Familial DNA testing has become increasingly popular in recent years. Have you or someone you know used a service like this? If you are willing to share, was that person surprised by the results, or unearthed a long-lost relative through the process? Are there any ethical complications to consider as a result of DNA matching?
5. Several of the characters put themselves at risk or made major sacrifices to keep baby Marianna safe. Who do you think had the most to lose by their actions and why? Has there ever been a time when you or someone you know has made a big sacrifice for another family member?
6. Cross cultural adoption is a common practice in America, but less common in many other countries. Sometimes the adopted child may wonder about the circumstances surrounding their birth, or the culture they might have been raised in, had they not been adopted. In what ways did this book address those issues? Were you, or someone you know adopted from another culture? Was it important for that person to learn more about their birth, or connect with the culture of the country they were born into?
7. How important was the setting, Puerto Rico, in this book? Did you feel this was a story that could have taken place anywhere, or was the setting an integral part of the story? Did the book make you want to visit Puerto Rico?
8. In what ways did Gabby and Isabella grow or change by the end of the book? Despite being raised apart, what similarities did they have? Were they more similar by the end of the book than at the start? Did the characters offer any insight into the timeless question of nature versus nurture?
9. The themes of penance and redemption are present in the lives of several of the characters, Isabella, Coqui, Alberto, and Beatriz. In your opinion, is redemption truly possible? Or do our actions define us for the entirety of our lives? How does this book, and its character's experiences, support that argument?