

## Reading Group Guide for *Dreaming of Water* by A. J. Banner

1. Why did A. J. Banner choose to make Astrid a forensic document examiner? Why is Astrid's profession important in the story?
2. How has Astrid's past shaped her into the person she is in the beginning, and how does she change by the end?
3. Nina's death was a turning point for several characters in the story. How did Astrid, her mother, her father, and Aunt Maude deal with their emotions differently? How does Astrid's mother cope with grief?
4. At one point, Astrid feels, "all these years, as if she herself has been drowning in guilt." What does this mean, and what are the different meanings of "drowning" and "water" throughout the book?
5. Astrid uncovers secrets during her investigation into the past. What secrets surprised you most? Did Astrid keep a secret? What was it and what were the consequences?
6. The story takes place on the Pacific Northwest coast, in a fictional town called Heron Bay. What part does the natural setting play in the story?
7. How does Aunt Maude's house differ from the Michaels mansion on the hill? How does Astrid think of each house at the beginning versus the end?
8. How do typewriters, typewriting and handwriting play into the story? What do you think are the pros and cons of society shifting away from typewritten and handwritten communication toward electronic forms of communication?
9. Discuss the role of memory in this novel. How does each character remember and interpret events differently? Which version of events rings true to you?
10. In your opinion, who was actually responsible for Nina's death and why?