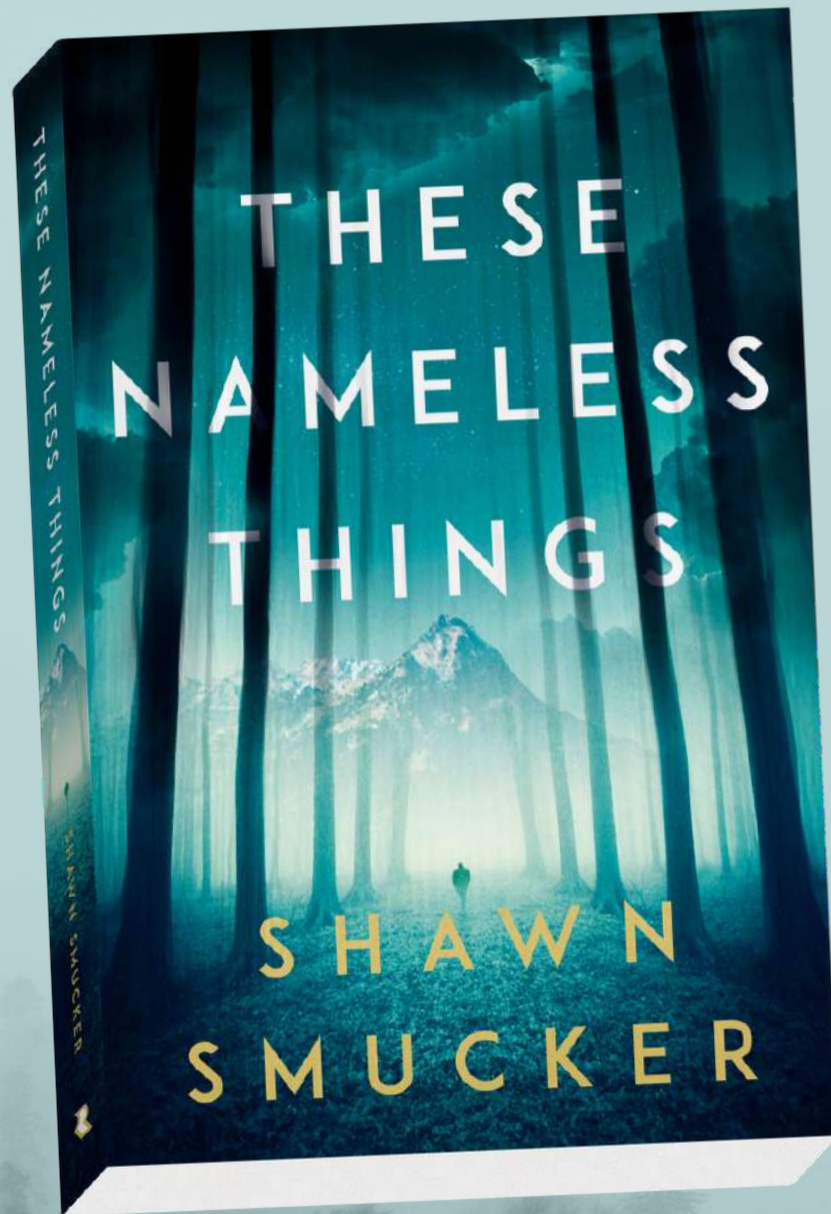


BOOK CLUB GUIDE



Includes discussion questions,
author Q&A, playlist, and more

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These Nameless Things by Shawn Smucker

Dan escaped captivity from the mountain long ago, but believes his brother is still there and waits each day in a nearby town for his escape. What Dan doesn't realize is that the rest of the townspeople are also waiting—but for reasons he never imagined.

Hosting Book Club

*Thanks so much for reading **These Nameless Things**. I hope it made you think, that there were characters you identified with, and most of all, that you enjoyed the story. Happy reading!*
—Shawn

FOOD AND DRINK IDEAS

The food and drink in the story are simple and earthy. If you want to have some food while discussing the book, why not try some fresh garden vegetables, a hearty loaf of bread, and some fruit juice?

PLAYLIST

You can find the Spotify playlist I listened to while writing this book [here](#).

BOOKMARKS

Scroll to the last page of this book club guide for printable bookmarks to share with your book club.



Author Q&A

What gave you the idea for this book?

Around 2010, I started playing around with a story idea that involved someone escaping from Dante's *Inferno*. Following that line of thinking, I wondered what it would be like if only one person remained in the *Inferno* and what it would take to get them out. That's where the idea for this story began.

Which character do you relate to the most?

I'm afraid it's Dan! He's hesitant, a bit lukewarm, and indecisive. I guess that's me . . . although I'm not as much of a liar. I like Dan because eventually he is able to accept himself and what he's done, and that's the first step to healing, self-acceptance, and forgiveness.

Where do the characters' names come from?

Dan is from Dante. I thought it would be interesting for Adam, the last man in the *Inferno*, to share the name of the first man. Miho, as a Japanese name, can mean "beauty," and as a Croatian name it means "Who is like God?" Lucia means "light." Kathy's name comes from perhaps the worst antagonist in all of literature, Cathy Ames from John Steinbeck's *East of Eden*.

How much did you pull from Dante's *Inferno*, and why use that book as a backdrop?

There were quite a few ideas and themes borrowed from Dante. You'll have to read it yourself to find all the hidden clues!

What were some of the main themes that emerged in the story?

The inevitability of death, the unreliability of memory, the strength of brotherhood, the shame of guilt, the crucial nature of forgiveness, the difficulty of self-sacrifice, and the importance of honesty are all major themes.

Do you plot your books out ahead of time or write the story as it comes? Did you outline this novel ahead of time?

I generally write about 20,000 words or so and then begin imagining what the middle and ending might be. For this book, I wrote and rewrote so many times that I can't really remember how much was outlined and how much was flying by the seat of my pants.



You write about death and memory a lot. Why?

I'm fascinated by those topics, mostly because of how much we really don't know about them. What happens after death? Why are our memories so unreliable? How does the way we remember our past shape our present? How does our fear of death impact the way we die? I guess I'll be writing about these things for a long time.

Discussion Questions

1. Three quotes serve as the epigraph for the book. What do you think is their relevance to the story?
2. How did you as the reader feel after Dan told the story of his brother in chapter 1 and then admitted that it was a lie?
3. What did you make of the mysterious woman who arrived from inside the mountain? Did you trust her in the beginning? Why or why not?
4. Why do you think the vegetables were going bad and everyone was getting their memories back? Do you think the two were related?
5. Why do you think Dan didn't tell anyone about the woman in his house?
6. What did you think of the relationship between Dan and Miho?
7. How did you feel about the woman at the end of part 1, when she convinced Dan to go back into the mountain?
8. Sarah and Karon were the only two in the mountain who seemed to remain there of their own accord. Why do you think they were there?
9. Do you think Dan was right to go into the mountain after his brother, or do you think he should have continued waiting? Why?
10. How did Dan's relationship with his father affect his actions in the story?
11. If Dan and Adam were modeled after Jacob and Esau in the Bible, how does knowing that change or add to your understanding of them as individuals?

12. Was Dan right to leave Lucia behind? Why or why not?

13. Chapter 27 is titled "Forgiveness." What roles did forgiveness, or unforgiveness, play in the story?

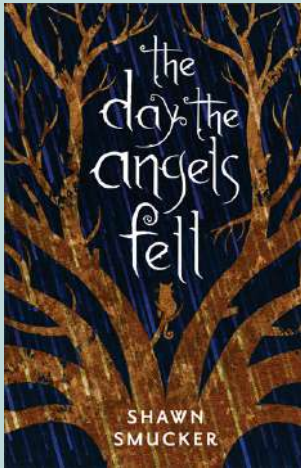
14. What did you make of the small company's crossing the plain? What stood out to you about the plain?

15. What do you think waited for the company on the other side of the eastern mountain?



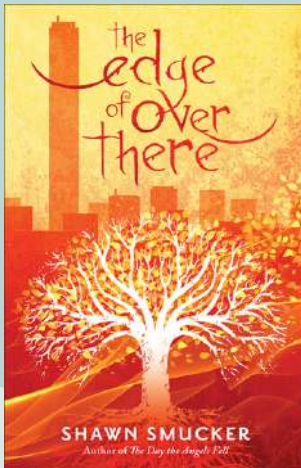
What to Read Next

MORE READS FROM SHAWN SMUCKER



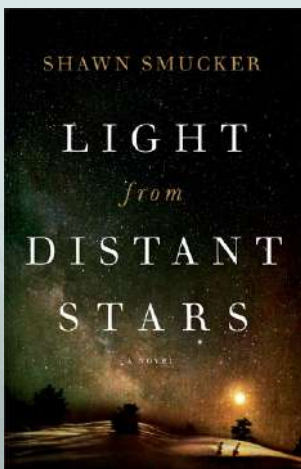
***The Day the Angels Fell* by Shawn Smucker**

When tragedy shakes young Samuel Chambers' family, his search for answers entangles him in the midst of an ancient conflict and leads him on an unexpected journey to find the Tree of Life.



***The Edge of Over There* by Shawn Smucker**

When Abra Miller goes to New Orleans Cemetery No. 1 to search for the Tree of Life, she discovers a city teetering on the edge of chaos, people desperate for a way out, and an enemy intent on enslaving the human race.



***Light from Distant Stars* by Shawn Smucker**

When Cohen Marah steps over the body of his dead father on a cold spring morning, he steps into a labyrinth of memory. In the week that follows, he must confront his traumatic past, a violent present, and the most frightening question of all—did he kill his father?

About the Author



Photo Credit: John Sanderson
of Sanderson Images

Shawn Smucker is the award-winning author of *Light from Distant Stars*, the young adult novels *The Day the Angels Fell* and *The Edge of Over There*, and the memoir *Once We Were Strangers*. He lives with his wife and six children in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

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 [Shawn Smucker, Writer](#)

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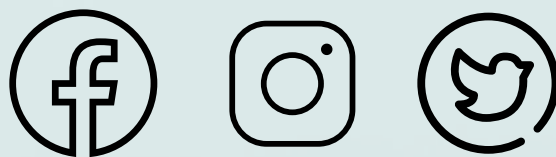


ABOUT REVELL

Providing books that inspire and equip readers to find hope and help for everyday life.

We hope you've enjoyed this digital book club guide! Find us on social media or visit our website for more book club resources and Christian fiction titles to enjoy. Happy reading!

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*That was
also the
night I
started to
remember.
Not
made-up
memories.
Real ones.
I promise.
This Part
is True.*

#TheseNamelessThings



*“Writing is
always there
for you. This is
what I have
learned.”
Sharon Smucker*



*Have you
ever, for a
flash of
time,
understood
the
significance
of being?
The
Miracle of
Existing?*

#TheseNamelessThings