

# LISA SCOTTOLINE

#1 BESTSELLING AUTHOR

PUTNAM  
DISCUSSION  
GUIDE

## *THE TRUTH ABOUT THE DEVLINS*

**1.**

TJ is considered the black sheep of the Devlin family. Did you think his status changed over the course of the novel? In which instances do we see TJ “save” his family, and which moments of “saving” is he credited for?

**2.**

TJ demonstrates great empathy in his role as an investigator. Where do you think this ability stems from?

**3.**

For the sake of his family, TJ is forced to keep some secrets, putting himself at greater punitive risk than his “perfect” siblings. Why does TJ choose to take this risk? Why do you think John specifically chose to confide in TJ?

**4.**

Both John and Gabby, for different reasons, ask TJ for his help. To what extent does TJ have a reciprocal relationship with his siblings? How does birth order play a part in the respective familial expectations placed on them?

**5.**

TJ is so embroiled in the investigations for his siblings that he can barely keep himself afloat. With an eye toward achieving full recovery, did you agree with the choices TJ made during the novel?

**6.**

When TJ’s mother accuses him of lying, she warns him to stay out of trouble “because [she’s] tired of being afraid for [him].” Did you think this was a fair statement? To what extent is addiction criminalized when it comes to accusations against TJ?

**7.**

At the end of the day, the Devlins are both a family and business. How does this duality complicate TJ’s role as an outsider? How does it inform the lengths he goes to to protect his family members? Discuss whether it’s best to keep family and business separate.

**8.**

Be it by the work of TJ’s father or brother, TJ manages to keep his name out of Rigel’s accident. To what extent are John or Paul’s efforts for TJ self-serving? Do the Devlins really look out for one another?

**9.**

TJ is haunted by the fact that nobody truly believes he has changed. Why do others struggle to see his growth, and why does this matter to him? Discuss how he recreates his identity through the course of the novel.

**10.**

Carrie, TJ’s ex, and Nancy, John’s wife, are two of the Devlins’s interpersonal casualties. Discuss their purpose in the novel. How do they compare to Gabby and TJ’s mother?

**11.**

Author Lisa Scottoline sheds light on the real-life atrocities of medical experimentation on Black prisoners, through the story of Gabby’s case. Discuss how this story thread amplified TJ’s journey throughout the novel.

**12.**

In honor of the title, discuss what “truths” the Devlins are forced to reckon with about themselves. Do you think they finally faced them?