

BOOK CLUB KIT

“I was riveted
until the very last
shocking sentence!”
—OPRAH WINFREY



FROM THE AUTHOR

A LETTER

Dear Book Club Readers,

Culpability is a suspenseful family drama set in the present day that takes on the incursion of artificial intelligence into our lives. If you're like me, you're a bit scared and also mystified by what it means to be thrust into a world newly alive with chatbots, image and video generators, drones, self-driving cars, and other manifestations of AI—let alone all the AI-generated misinformation that confronts us every day.

In *Culpability*, I've tried to explore this moment through the lens of a single family caught up in a dilemma that threatens everything they hold dear. The novel touches on our collective fear of AI's encroachment into our lives, along with its threats to our relationships and our autonomy. But it also explores our capacity for resilience and profound love in the face of danger and seemingly insurmountable challenges.

I'm so grateful for your support and hope you have an engaging conversation.

With gratitude,
Bruce Holsinger

CHESAPEAKE BAY

PHOTOS OF



PLAYLIST

In the epilogue of *Culpability*, Charlie and Noah clean the family garage to the sounds of “Nineties Nostalgia,” a playlist put together by Lorelei.

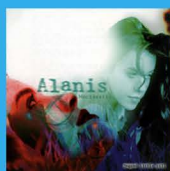
Here are some of the songs I imagined for this scene, put together in a playlist called Cleaning the Garage—also appropriate for cooking!
—Bruce Holsinger



Under the Bridge
Red Hot Chili Peppers



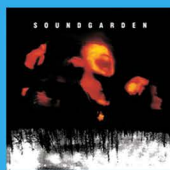
Come As You Are
Nirvana



Head Over Feet
Alanis Morissette



Today
The Smashing Pumpkins



Spoonman
Soundgarden



Say Something
Christina Aguilera



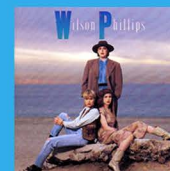
All Eyez On Me
2Pac Shakur



Breakfast at Tiffany's
Deep Blue Something



Foto de Familia
Carlos Varela



Hold On
Wilson Phillips



Malibu
Hole



Djobi Djoba
Gipsy Kings



Life Is a Rollercoaster
Ronan Keating

Listen on Spotify by scanning the code to the right with your mobile device.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. At the heart of the book is a family of five, struggling under extreme pressure to sort out what happened in the most pivotal moment of their lives. Did you guess who is responsible for the accident? Do AI and human action share in the blame?
2. When the family is first introduced, they seem happy and functional—and yet the accident puts pressure on fault lines between them that existed long before the novel's beginning. How did the crisis expose each character's strengths and weaknesses? Who rose to the occasion, and who fell short?
3. Throughout the novel, the friction between family members often comes from comparison: the brilliant wife and the humble husband; the favorite child and the overlooked sibling. How do the characters assess their place within the family, and how do they react to it? Are those assessments accurate?
4. There's a memorable character in *Culpability*: tech billionaire Daniel Monet. You likely bring a lot of associations and preconceptions to those words: "tech billionaire." How does Daniel Monet fit the type you expect? How does he subvert your expectations? Did you have anyone in mind when you read his character?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

5. We're all anxious about our shared AI future—and yet AI can also make our lives easier and even save lives. Did reading the novel make you more fearful of AI's possibilities? Are there any parts of AI that you use in your day-to-day life?
6. How did you feel about Alice's friend Blair? When did you suspect she was a bot? Do you see Blair as helpful or menacing, or a mix of both?
7. Many of the characters have secrets they keep from each other. How would things have been different if the characters shared their secrets sooner? What about if they held onto their secrets longer? What would you have done in their shoes?
8. Lorelai, the wife in the story, is a world-class AI programmer and researcher and also a leader in the ethics of AI. Do you see her roles as inherently contradictory? Can AI be moral? Do you view her as ethical in her own life within the family?
9. There are two love stories in the novel—the one between Charlie, the high school graduate who was driving the car, and Dissee, the daughter of billionaire Daniel Monet, and the marriage between Lorelai and Noah. In both cases, the relationships are between people who have very different backgrounds. Discuss the role of class and privilege and how they intersect in the novel.