

Marlborough Public Library Adult Book Club

November 18 or 20, 2025

*Remarkably Bright Creatures* by Shelby Van Pelt

Questions abridged from:

<https://www.readinggroupguides.com/reviews/remarkably-bright-creatures/guide>

1. What kind of person do you think Marcellus would be if he were human? What qualities do Marcellus and Tova both share that make this remarkable friendship a success?
2. Each of these characters --- animal and human --- need each other in a specific way, even if they don't realize this at first. What qualities bind these characters to each other? Are they connected by loss, grief or something else?
3. On page 9, Tova empathizes with the sharks in the big aquarium tank, musing that she "understands what it means to never be able to stop moving, lest you find yourself unable to breathe." Why do you think she feels so compelled to keep busy? What would happen if she simply stopped?
4. In contrast to how Tova keeps busy, Cameron emerges as a character who deals with grief by remaining stagnant, refusing to even try to reach his potential, much to the frustration of those who care about him. Why do you think he sabotages himself?
5. REMARKABLY BRIGHT CREATURES takes place in a Pacific Northwest coastal town in the recent past. The watery Puget Sound setting plays a major role in the plot, but how else does the setting inform the novel? How do you think the novel would be different if it were set somewhere like Arizona or Minnesota?
6. Marcellus remarks on page 59 that "fingerprints are like keys, with their specific shape. I remember all keys, too." From the house key Tova loses to the ring of keys Marcellus finds at the bottom of the sea, the novel is filled with various types of keys. What do you think keys symbolize in this novel?
7. In the middle of the novel, on page 177, Cameron says to Tova, "conscience does make cowards of us all." What do you think he means by this statement? Do you agree with this?
8. This novel explores different characters who are faced with major choices: they can open themselves up to something new and take an unexpected, daring opportunity, or they can continue on as they have been. Have you ever faced a moment in your life where a critical choice could change everything? Did you take the leap or not?