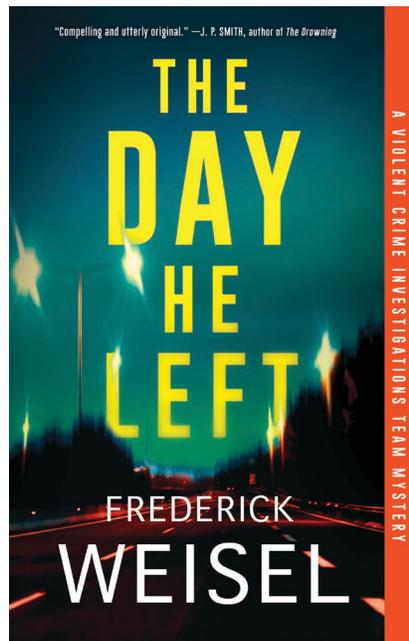


Discussion Questions for THE DAY HE LEFT



1. This novel explores family dynamics, both the family of the missing teacher and the families of the detectives. How do the events of the novel affect the missing teacher's family—his wife, son, and daughter? What do we learn about the families of Mahler, Eden, and Frames?
2. Eddie Mahler is in therapy in this novel. What does he discover about himself through his exchanges with the therapist?
3. Annie Behrens wishes she could press rewind on her life—go back to those moments in her life where her world turned and make different decisions. What decisions does she regret? Have you ever had that thought?
4. Why does the Highway 60 case affect Eden Somers so deeply? What skills does she use to try to solve the case?
5. In Chapter 5, while in court, Martin Coyle reflects on a kind of personal philosophy about life. What does this philosophy involve?
6. What was the missing teacher, Paul Behrens, trying to achieve? Was he justified?
7. Eddie Mahler asks himself if his VCI detectives are a good team? From their performance in this novel, are they a good team?

8. Claire Behrens tells Eden her father told her that both revealing and keeping secrets can be damaging. Rivas worries about the secrets in his own life. Eden recalls her mother telling her a family secret. What role do secrets play in the novel?
9. The VCI detectives use an evidence board to picture their cases. Detective Rivas wonders what the evidence board for his own life would look like. Can you picture the evidence board for your life?
10. When Claire Behrens tells Eden her favorite subject is algebra, Claire says the word means the “reunion of broken parts.” Eden thinks, “Teenage girls need solutions, equations that make sense.” What challenges do the two thirteen-year-old girls in the novel—Claire Behrens and Zoe McFarland—face?