



# I AM THE CAGE

By Allison Sweet Grant

## Discussion Guide

1. How might Justine's feelings about her situation have been different had she not been 11 years old at the time of her procedure?
2. What does Justine mean when she repeatedly says, "God is punishing me, this is all a big mistake, I'm not really supposed to be here"?
3. How does Justine/Elisabeth process and handle feelings of shame in the novel?
4. Why was it important for Elisabeth to isolate herself from her former life? What was she trying to accomplish?
5. Why does Elisabeth choose to express herself through poetry? Did you enjoy this side of her and if so, what poem was your favorite and why?
6. Elisabeth refers to Dr. Faustus by Marlow many times throughout the novel. Why is that work so meaningful to her, and what might it represent?
7. The junk drawer is a metaphor carried throughout the novel. What does it represent and how does the idea of the junk drawer apply to you?
8. What is the significance of the Forgotten Girl poem (hardcover pg. 203)? How does it relate to Justine's experience/memory in the lighthouse (pg. 252-256)?
9. Did you sympathize with Justine's mother at all? What might the story have looked like had it been told from her perspective rather than Justine's?
10. If you were to put yourself in one of the character's shoes, what might you have done differently?
11. When looking back on what happened, Elisabeth's mother says to her, "A part of me had hoped you'd forgotten about it" (pg. 277). How did this statement make you feel? What does it suggest about their relationship?
12. What do you think happens to Elisabeth and her mother's relationship after the novel concludes?
13. What is special and/or unique about Justine/Elisabeth's relationship with Kacey? Does it remind you of anyone in your own life?
14. Noah says to Elisabeth, "Maybe it takes courage to stay, and courage to go" (pg. 130). What does he mean by this?
15. What do you think happens to Elisabeth and Noah's relationship after the novel concludes?