

## DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR *IVY BRIEFS*

As presented in the book, Martha's decision to go to law school wasn't necessarily well thought out. Do you think she made a wise choice?

Martha often demonstrates a somewhat unfounded sense of self-doubt. She is intelligent and capable, but sees herself as inferior to others. Why do you think that is? Can you relate to that feeling? Why do you think some people seem to have an innate sense of self-worth, while others are predisposed to feelings of inadequacy?

During orientation, Martha's law school friendships were formed "very quickly and under extreme duress." What was your opinion of her group of friends? Were they mismatched or well-suited? Have you managed to make lasting friendships with unexpected people?

Several of these characters in the book "couldn't manage to feel good about themselves and their own intelligence unless they made others feel inferior." Have you encountered people like this, whether in school, at work, or otherwise? Do you think law school draws out the worst in people, or were these characters naturally inclined to act the way they did?

How did you feel about The Sadistic Professor? Did his ends justify his means?

Unlike most of her fellow students, Martha was married during law school. How do you think that influenced her experience? How do you think law school affected her budding marriage?

What role does New York City itself play in the story? How might Martha's experience have been different if she hadn't come from a small Midwestern town?

Do you think the Ivy League fosters the concept of entitlement? What if Martha had ended up attending a lower-ranked law school? How might her experience have been different if she had come from an Ivy League college background?

What do you think about the concept of "minimal proficiency," as described during Martha's experience with moot court and the bar exam? Is it a benefit that helps with time management and delegation, or does it go against the idea that "any job worth doing is worth doing well?"

How did you feel about the use of legal terminology and references in the book? Did you feel as though you learned anything?

Do you think Martha went on to be happy at the Lavish Law Firm? Did she make the right decision in following the beaten path to a job at a large firm, or would she have been better off making a different choice?

What was your favorite vignette from the book? Did you relate to it because it echoed a personal experience or because it offered a view into a different realm?