

BOOK CLUB QUESTIONS

Nine Inches by Tom Perrotta

1. In “Backrub,” how are Lt. Finnegan and Donald alike? In what ways do their lives and thoughts mirror each other?
2. What do Vicki and Jessica each want in “Grade My Teacher?”
3. Compare the two fathers in “The Smile on Happy Chang’s Face.” What does the smile on Happy Chang’s face mean to Jack?
4. In “Kiddie Pool,” Gus finds out that his wife Martha had an affair with their neighbour, Lonny, who was Gus’s close friend before he passed away. But the news of the affair isn’t what bothers Gus the most. What does bother him and why? What might this have to do with the title of the story?
5. What do you think is the real reason Clay dislikes Mrs. Scotto so much in “Senior Season?” Why does he finally decide to help her in the end?
6. In “The Chosen Girl,” what is so intriguing to Rose about the Chosen? What do you think is the significance of their title, aside from religious designation?
7. Compare “The Test-Taker” with “Backrub” and “Senior Season.” How are these stories similar? How does the protagonist in each of these stories feel about where he is in life, and what resolutions does each come to?
8. Broken or dysfunctional relationships, affairs, and love constitute a few of the major themes in the collection. How does Perrotta confront these topics? Pick two or three stories and discuss.
9. Police officers appear in several of the stories, such as “Backrub,” “Grade My Teacher,” “The Smile on Happy Chang’s Face,” and “The All-Night Party.” Discuss the role cops assume in the stories. Do their roles change or deviate from how they are initially presented?

10. How does the title *Nine Inches* tie the stories together? How are the stories otherwise connected?