Discussion Questions: The Execution of Noa P. Singleton

1. Do you believe in the death penalty? Did your opinion about the death penalty change after reading this novel?

2. How did Noa's self-professed guilt impact how you felt about her as a character?

3. Do you believe Marlene ever intended to submit the clemency petition? What do you think her motivation was all along, or did it transform as the novel progressed?

4. How does Noa's view of Marlene change over the course of the novel? Do you think Noa respects, fears, or pities Marlene more than she hates her?

5. Why did Caleb not help Noa at trial? What was so important to him that he wouldn't risk disclosing Marlene's involvement? Is he weak and selfish, or simply unable to understand the ramifications of his actions? Does Noa regret her relationship with him?

6. Noa does not help a great deal with her appeals, although she did push forward with a defense at trial. Why do you think Noa decided not to fight for her life once the trial was finished?

7. On pages 306–307, Marlene says that "apologies are really just little weeds that grow over monuments and headstones. They keep coming back, but never stop ruining what lies beneath. If an apology is truly authentic, the pain is supposed to stop. Right?" What do you think this means? Do you agree with her? Why or why not?

8. Does Marlene actually feel any remorse or guilt by the end of the novel? If so, is it enough? On page 307, she says, "I am not in the dirt beside you, no matter how much I belong." Does this change your impression of Marlene?

9. What is the symbolism behind burying Noa's manuscript at the end of the novel?

10. If you were on death row, what would be the three things you would miss the most? What would be your final words? What would be your last meal?

11. What do you think Marlene will do with the information she learns at the end?

12. All of the characters in *The Execution of Noa P. Singleton* are imprisoned in some way. With whom did you most sympathize?

Questions issued by publisher