A READER'S GUIDE

BEYOND *My* WILDEST DREAMS

a novel by J. Alexander

Questions for book clubs, reading groups, and anyone who wants to sit a little longer with Sage's story.

RECOVERY & SOBRIETY

1. Sage begins the story believing that his drinking is largely beyond his control. At what point, if any, did your perception of his alcoholism change?
2. What does Sage gain — and what does he have to give up — when he begins pursuing sobriety?
3. Do you think Sage changes because of the Twelve Steps, his encounters with the supernatural, his own willingness to change, or some combination of the three?
4. What does the novel suggest about the difference between simply stopping drinking and actually recovering?
5. Were there moments when you wanted Sage to make a different choice? Why?
6. Sage felt enormous suffering and grief that eventually propelled his recovery. Is suffering necessary for spiritual growth, or is that simply something we tell ourselves afterward?
7. Does Sage actually have a choice in what happens to him?
8. Would you have followed the oracle's instructions if you were Sage?
9. What did you think about Sage's 12th step experience? Did it complete his evolution?

SPIRITUALITY & THE SUPERNATURAL

1. The novel blends ideas from AA, Buddhism, Hinduism, and the supernatural. How did these different traditions complement or challenge one another?
2. What do you think Dipa Ma represents? A supernatural being, a manifestation of Sage's own mind, something spiritual — or something else?
3. Did the supernatural elements make Sage's recovery feel more meaningful to you, or did they make you question what was really happening?
4. What do you think the novel is ultimately saying about faith and the need to believe in something beyond ourselves?

IDENTITY & BELONGING

1. Sage lives with a sense of being caught between different worlds. How does his Indian-American identity shape his understanding of spirituality and belonging?
2. Where do you see Sage struggling with the expectations of others versus his own sense of who he is?
3. Do you think Sage's transformation is primarily about becoming someone new — or discovering who he already was?

Thanks for reading.