

From Away, by David Carkeet
Discussion Questions

The People

Why does Denny become Homer? What motivates his imposture? What role does his passion for model trains play?

We do not see Homer and Sarah interact in the novel, but we nonetheless get a sense of their unusual relationship. Why were they together?

What makes Sarah tick? What does she want from life?

Sparky is both a comic character and a player in the plot. In what ways is he a player?

How are Denny and Homer alike? How are they different?

One reviewer wrote about *From Away*, “The make or break is Denny,” meaning that the reader’s feelings about Denny determine how the reader feels about the book. (a) In your discussion group, is there such a correlation? (b) How did *you* feel about Denny? (c) If your feelings about him changed in the course of the novel, what made them change? What specific moments or scenes affected your view of him?

The Style and Structure

How many “back stories” play a part in the plot? What are they?

What elements introduced in the course of the novel come into play in the final chapters?

From Away is a comic novel. For you, what are its comic high points?

The Place

How does the setting of Vermont—or, more generally, rural New England—suit the story?

Why are Homer’s dogs named Calvin and Chester?

The Story

Denny is quite successful in pretending to be Homer. Is this plausible?

Discuss the ending of *From Away* in terms of plot closure. Do you have enough of an idea about what will happen to the major characters, or do you want more?

The story is based on the fact that Denny and Homer look almost exactly alike. What other novels can you think of that are about lookalikes? What movies? Do the story lines of any of these other works have anything in common with the plot of *From Away*?