

Dark Matter

Blake Crouch

A propulsive, mind-bending thriller about a husband and father whose ordinary life is suddenly upended, sending him on a journey through the choices that make us who we are.

Reading level: Easy

Best for: Clubs who love a page-turner with a beating heart and plenty to feel

Discussion

WARM-UP

1. Where did you do most of your reading, and did this book make you want to stay snuggled in longer than usual?
2. What was the first scene that pulled you in and made you forget what time it was?



DIGGING IN

1. Jason's quiet home life in Chicago is painted with so much warmth. What small detail of his everyday world felt the most comforting to you?
2. The book asks us to think about the roads not taken. Was there a 'what if' moment in your own life that came to mind while reading, and how did sitting with it feel?
3. How did the love between Jason and Daniela land for you? Was there a moment that made you want to text someone you love?
4. When the story got tense, what kept you feeling steady? A character, an idea, a hope you were holding onto?




GOING DEEP

1. By the end, the book seems to suggest that the life we actually have is its own kind of miracle. Did reading it change how you looked at your own ordinary Tuesday?
2. Without spoiling anything, what feeling did you carry around the day after finishing? Did it linger like a dream or settle in like a hug?

On the table

-  **Loaded baked potato bar**
Hearty Chicago-in-winter comfort, easy to set out buffet-style so everyone can build their own
-  **Slow-cooker beef and barley soup with crusty bread**
Warm, nourishing, and perfect for a story about coming home to the people you love
-  **Brown butter chocolate chip cookies**
A nod to the simple, everyday joys the book reminds us to cherish

To sip

-  **Spiked hot cocoa with bourbon and whipped cream**
Cozy, indulgent, and a soft echo of Jason's late-night Chicago bar scene
-  **Vanilla chai latte (no alcohol)**
Spiced, warm, and grounding, for sipping during the quieter questions
-  **Mulled red wine with orange and cinnamon**
Wintery and a little mysterious, like the book itself

Run of show

7:00 **Soft landing**
Greet guests with a warm drink and let them build a plate. No rush.

7:20 **Warm-up chat**
Settle in with blankets and start with the two warm-up questions.

7:40 **Heart of the book**
Move into the theme questions. Let pauses happen. Refill mugs.

8:15 **Cookie break and trivia**
Pass the cookie tray and play a few rounds of trivia, low stakes.

8:35 **The deep end (gently)**
Move to the two deeper questions. Encourage feelings over analysis.

9:00 **Scorecards and send-off**
Fill out scorecards together, share one-word reactions, send everyone home with a bookmark.

HOST TIPS

- Lean into the lighting: lamps and candles only, no overheads.
- Have extra blankets and slippers by the door so guests can truly settle.
- If a question lands quietly, sit with the silence. Cozy nights breathe.

Playlist

Hushed, late-night, gently glowing indie and ambient with a heartbeat underneath

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|-----------------------------------|--|
| 01 Holocene - Bon Iver | 02 Re: Stacks - Bon Iver |
| 03 Saturn - Sleeping at Last | 04 Night Mail - Olafur Arnalds |
| 05 An Ending (Ascent) - Brian Eno | 06 To Build a Home - The Cinematic Orchestra |
| 07 Heartbeats - Jose Gonzalez | 08 Постлюдия - Nils Frahm |

Trivia

1. Who wrote Dark Matter? (Blake Crouch)
2. In what year was Dark Matter first published? (2016)
3. In what U.S. city is much of the story set? (Chicago)
4. What is the profession of the main character, Jason Dessen, at the start of the book? (Physics professor)
5. What field of science underpins the novel's central premise? (Quantum physics (the many-worlds interpretation))
6. Blake Crouch is also known for another sci-fi series adapted for TV. What is it? (Wayward Pines)
7. What streaming service adapted Dark Matter into a TV series in 2024? (Apple TV+)
8. What is the name of Jason's wife in the novel? (Daniela)

Rate the book

Cozy factor

☆☆☆☆☆

How much it moved me

☆☆☆☆☆

Page-turn pull

☆☆☆☆☆

Stayed with me after

☆☆☆☆☆

Would re-read on a snowy day

☆☆☆☆☆

One word for how this book made me feel: _____

A person I want to hug after reading this: _____

The snack I'd pair with this book forever: _____

YOU'RE INVITED

A Cozy Night for Dark Matter

Bring your slippers and your softest cardigan. We're curling up with soup, cocoa, and Blake Crouch's tender, twisty story about the lives we live and the ones we almost did.



Plan your own book club night

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