



Bad Blood

John Carreyrou

A jaw-dropping true story about Theranos, the Silicon Valley startup that promised to revolutionize blood testing and unraveled under the weight of its own myth. Carreyrou's reporting reads like a thriller while raising big questions about trust, ambition, and truth.

Reading level: Moderate

Best for: A curious, conversational club that loves nonfiction that reads like a novel

Discussion

WARM-UP

1. Where did you do most of your reading of this one, and did you need a cup of tea nearby to steady your nerves?
2. What was the first moment in the book that made you put it down and say 'oh no' out loud?

DIGGING IN

1. The book is full of people who wanted very badly to believe. When in your own life have you wanted something to be true so much that you almost talked yourself into it?
2. So much of this story turns on charisma. Who in your life has that kind of magnetic pull, and how do you stay grounded around it?
3. Many employees stayed long after their gut told them to leave. What has made it hard for you to walk away from a job, group, or situation that didn't feel right?
4. The whistleblowers risked a lot to speak up. Was there a small moment in your own life when you spoke up (or wish you had), and what gave you the courage or held you back?

GOING DEEP

1. Reading this, did you feel more sympathy or more frustration toward the people caught inside the company, and did that feeling shift as the story unfolded?
2. After finishing, how has this book quietly changed the way you listen to a big promise, whether from a brand, a boss, or a friend?

On the table

🍲 **Slow-cooker tomato soup with grilled cheese triangles**

Comforting red and warm, a gentle nod to the blood-testing theme without being gimmicky

🍞 **Palo Alto-style sourdough bread bowl with spinach artichoke dip**

A cozy Bay Area staple for a book set deep in Silicon Valley

🍪 **Warm chocolate chip cookies from the oven**

The ultimate comfort food for a story that needs a little sweetness to balance the bitterness

To sip

☕ **Honey chamomile tea with lemon (no alcohol)**

Soothing and grounding, perfect for a story that will get your pulse up

🍷 **Mulled red wine with orange and cinnamon**

Warm, deep red, and easy to sip while you gasp at the next chapter

☕ **Hot spiced apple cider (no alcohol)**

Homey and nostalgic, a cozy counterweight to the high-stakes story

Run of show

7:00 Arrivals and mugs in hand

Greet everyone with tea or cider at the door, soft music playing, blankets on the couch

7:15 Soup and settle

Serve soup and grilled cheese buffet-style so people can curl up with a bowl

7:35 Warm-up questions

Start with the two cozy warm-ups while people are still eating, no pressure to be profound

8:00 Theme round

Move into the personal theme questions, let silences breathe, refill drinks often

8:40 Cookies and deeper talk

Bring out warm cookies, transition into the two deeper questions while everyone is sugared and softened

9:15 Scorecards and goodbyes

Pass out scorecards and bookmarks, vote on the next book, send everyone home with a cookie in foil

HOST TIPS

- Keep lighting low with lamps and candles, no overheads, so people feel free to share honestly
- Have a 'pause card' someone can hold up if the conversation gets too heated, this is a cozy night first
- Prep food in the slow cooker and oven so you can actually sit and talk instead of hovering in the kitchen

Playlist

Soft acoustic and mellow indie with a faintly uneasy undercurrent, like a fire crackling while a storm rolls in

01 Re: Stacks - Bon Iver

03 The Night We Met - Lord Huron

05 I Will Follow You into the Dark - Death Cab for Cutie

07 Landslide - Fleetwood Mac

02 Holocene - Bon Iver

04 Skinny Love - Birdy

06 Bloodstream - Stateless

08 Cherry Wine - Hozier

Trivia

1. What publication did John Carreyrou work for when he broke the Theranos story? (The Wall Street Journal)
2. What was the name of Theranos's signature blood-testing device? (The Edison)
3. In what year was Bad Blood first published? (2018)
4. In which Silicon Valley city was Theranos headquartered for much of its run? (Palo Alto, California)
5. At what university did Elizabeth Holmes briefly study before dropping out to start Theranos? (Stanford)
6. What major Pulitzer-related honor has Carreyrou won for investigative reporting? (Two Polk Awards (and Pulitzer recognition for his Theranos coverage))
7. Bad Blood was later adapted into a Hulu series. What is its title? (The Dropout)
8. What signature wardrobe item was Elizabeth Holmes famous for wearing? (A black turtleneck)

Rate the book

Coziness of the read ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Gasps per chapter ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Heart tug ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Conversation starter ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Would recommend to a friend ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

One word for how this book made me feel: _____

The moment I wanted to hug someone in the story: _____

A small thing I'll carry with me from this book: _____

YOU'RE INVITED

Soup, Sweaters, and a Silicon Valley Scandal

Come curl up on the couch for a cozy night of tomato soup, warm cookies, and gentle gossip about the wildest startup story of the decade. Slippers encouraged.



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