

## BIG IN SWEDEN – Discussion Guide

1. Although all the contestants on *Sverige och Mig!* are American, they each have very different backgrounds and lifestyles. Who do you most relate to? Which characters remind you of people in your life?
2. On page 40, Declan says to Paulie: “You don’t think about me when you make decisions.” What do you make of Paulie’s choice to go, despite Declan’s disapproval? Do you think his reaction is fair? How can you balance freedom and responsibility in a long-term partnership?
3. During Viking Week Paulie clashes with Kevin about sexism. Later, in the van to Kiruna, the cast argues about voting. Have you ever had to work with somebody whose politics you disagreed with? What tactics did you use to get through it?
4. The filming of *Sverige och Mig!* is an emotional experience for both the cast and the crew, dubbed *Crying Americans* by some Swedes. Do you think it is ethical for television producers to instigate, edit, and broadcast such vulnerable moments?
5. On page 115, Else says: “the only thing Mom and Dad passed down to us is shame and secrecy.” What have you inherited from your family that goes beyond genetics?
6. When Paulie and Becki form an alliance against Tom, it is a turning point not only in their contest strategy, but in their friendship. What are some other relationship-changing moments you can identify throughout the novel?
7. Of all the challenges and new experiences Paulie participates in during filming, which do you most want to try? Which activity would you be least likely to do?
8. Author Sally Franson participated in an actual Swedish reality television show that inspired this book, and she has spoken about it in interviews online. What details can you find from her real experience that mirror the novel?

