

Reading Guide

The Last Train to Babylon

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Introduction

Fans of Alice Sebold and John Green will be transfixed by this sophisticated, edgy debut novel packing dark humor, biting wit, and a lot of Jack Daniels.



Who put the word fun in funeral? I can't think of anything fun about Rachel's funeral, except for the fact that she won't be there.

Aubrey Glass has a collection of potential suicide notes—just in case. And now, five years—and five notes—after leaving her hometown, Rachel's the one who goes and kills herself. Aubrey can't believe her luck.

But Rachel's death doesn't leave Aubrey in peace. There's a voicemail from her former friend, left only days before her death, that Aubrey can't bring herself to listen to—and worse, a macabre memorial-turned-high-school reunion that promises the opportunity to catch up with everyone . . . including the man responsible for everything that went wrong between Aubrey and Rachel.

In the days leading up to the funeral and infamous after party, Aubrey slips seamlessly between her past and present. Memories of friendship tangle with painful new encounters while underneath it all Aubrey feels the rush of something closing in, something she can no longer run from. And when the past and present collide in one devastating night, nothing will be the same again.

But facing the future means confronting herself and a shattering truth. Now, Aubrey must decide what will define her: what lies behind . . . or what waits ahead.

Questions for Discussion

1. Consider Aubrey's reaction to Rachel's suicide. Looking back on everything that followed, can you relate to her response?
2. Aubrey's friendship with Rachel was tumultuous. What kept them together? Would you consider their friendship toxic?
3. What was the importance of Mason jars to Aubrey?

4. How do the characters in the book react to the subjects of sexual assault and victim-blaming? How does Aubrey cope with these reactions?
5. In what ways did Aubrey doubt what happened between her and Eric Robbins? Was it reasonable for her to question the validity of the rape?
6. Was Rachel's character malicious or just naive? Do you think Aubrey was justified in cutting her out of her life?
7. Consider Aubrey's final scene with Eric in the bar restroom. Do you think her actions brought her peace? Why or why not?
8. How does the culture of Seaport influence Aubrey's ability to deal with her rape and move forward? Do you see evidence of this influence in the real world?
9. Speculate for a moment: What do you think Rachel's voicemail said?
10. We're left wondering what Aubrey's next move will be. How do you think this journey will impact her relationship with Karen? With Danny?