



LAY YOUR BODY DOWN

Reading Group Guide

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1. Although Del and Eve grew up in the same environment, they are very different people as adults. Why do you think that is? Do you believe they become more similar again by the end of the book?
2. Imagine that Del and Lars stayed together and eventually got married. Do you think she would have still left Messiah eventually? Why or why not?
3. Del has stopped going to church and feels disconnected from religion at the start of the novel, but she maintains her faith. How do you feel about this? Is her journey of doubt and discovery familiar to you?
4. Several women in this book reckon with internalized misogyny throughout. Del herself refuses to believe Eve and Esha, choosing instead to trust Finn and Nathaniel implicitly. Why do you think that is?
5. Although the majority of people enforcing Messiah's patriarchal structure are men, several women do as well, including Colette and Del's mother. Aside from internalized misogyny, what are some other reasons women sign on to an ideology where they are inferior?
6. In addition to their discussions about the church's oppression of women, Del and Esha discuss the racism and white supremacy inherent in their upbringing. How did you feel about this conversation? What do you think about Del's journey so far in learning about these issues, and what more does she have to learn?
7. This novel is told in both narrative and epistolary forms. What do you think about how Eve's blog and Del's diary were used to provide context and advance the story for both characters? Were there any elements of their past you wish the blog or diary entries had included?
8. Despite Rick Franklin's own taped confession and all the accusations against him in Parker's article, by the end of the book it seems like Messiah Church has not disavowed him. Do you think that's realistic, or do you think more members would have left once the truth came out?
9. Although we don't know if they will stay together, Del and Finn decide to continue their relationship at the end of the novel. How do you feel about this, given all that happened between them?
10. It is not clearly stated who pulled the trigger and shot Rick. Who do you think did it, and why?