



BOOK CLUB KIT

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The novel begins with a sudden death, which Lowen witnesses as a bystander. Why do you think the author chose to open the novel in this way? What did the scene foreshadow, in terms of the fragility of life, and how did the man's demise contrast with the prolonged, in-between state Verity found herself in as a character?
2. Lowen enjoys living in New York because, in the vastness of the city, she feels invisible: "The state of my life is irrelevant in a place this size. There are far more people here with stories much more pitiful than mine." Did you find yourself relating to Lowen in this moment? Or were you surprised by the frankness with which she compared her circumstances to others'? Did you agree with Lowen when she said that people who have experienced great hardship often seek out individuals who are "worse off," to make themselves feel better?
3. Lowen feels an immediate kinship with Jeremy when he helps her on the street: "Most people come to New York to be discovered. The rest of us come to hide." What ran through your mind when you read this? Did you think, in this moment, that Jeremy had something to hide? What, ultimately, was Jeremy's biggest secret?
4. Lowen sleepwalks, a condition that made her mother deeply paranoid, and caused her, in many ways, to feel socially isolated. What do you think the author was trying to communicate with Lowen's condition? What do you think she was trying to convey with Verity's dream sequences in the autobiography?
5. Corey and Lowen's relationship ended, in part, because he fell in love with the female protagonist of her first novel. He assumed her character's personality would closely match her own. After learning that Jeremy was the one to read Lowen's book, do you believe he succumbed to the same affliction, initially? Why or why not?
6. Separating the writer from their writing is a slippery concept in the novel. Jeremy tells Lowen that he didn't read most of Verity's books because he "didn't like being inside her head." After all, Verity wrote from the villain's point of view. How else did the author play with the fine line between fiction and reality, especially in regard to Verity's autobiography? What, in the novel, felt the most real to you?
7. Lowen admits she is an "emotionally challenging puzzle." She can be insecure, ungrateful, and selfish. She can also be tenacious, brave, and loyal. What did you make of her character? Did you like her? Where do you fall in the debate as to whether female characters should be "likable"? Discuss in relation to the following line from Verity[LR1]'s author's note: "No one is likable from the inside out."
8. Initially, Lowen is extremely reluctant to take over Verity's franchise, as she feels she won't be able to live up to readers' expectations. In your own life, have you ever been presented with a project that felt completely overwhelming to you? How do you approach complex tasks, especially ones that you feel will help you grow as an individual?
9. 1. When Lowen first walks into Verity's office, she feels like she's "rummaging around [Verity's] underwear drawer." Why does she feel this way? Is there something in your own life—a similar space, perhaps—that is so personal to you that you treat it as a kind of sanctuary? Why does it hold meaning to you?

10. When describing Verity's creative process, Jeremy tells Lowen that "the world was [Verity's] manuscript. No surface was safe." How do you like to express yourself? Do you like to scribble and take notes, like Verity? What activity makes you feel fully you?

11. How did you feel when you read Verity's introduction to her autobiography? Verity stresses, line by line, the importance of being truthful when writing a memoir, emphasizing the value of being ugly and honest and bloody and terrifying and exposed on the page. Did you trust Verity in that moment?

12. 1. In her autobiography, Verity says she fell in love with Jeremy "at first sight," although she clarifies that it "isn't really love at first sight until you've been with the person long enough for it to become love at first sight." Did this idea resonate with you? Why or why not?

13. As a writer of suspense novels, Lowen believes that "when there are suspicious situations, suspicious people almost always accompany those situations." Did you believe this to be true within the context of the novel? Do you believe it to be true in real life?

14. Lowen and Verity had very difficult relationships with their mothers. The relationship Verity depicts in her autobiography with Chastin and Harper is also very much outside the realm of nurturing and loving. Why do you believe the author created such complicated mother-daughter dynamics between her characters? Did Lowen and Verity's upbringings help you understand them better?

15. In her autobiography, Verity says she resented Harper and Chastin because they diverted Jeremy's attention away from her. Lowen, by contrast, believes that Jeremy should be with a partner who puts Crew first. Where do you fall in this debate? Do you believe a parent should love their child more than their spouse? Or do you believe that a person's ability to love expands when they have children—that love among family can be equally shared?

16. Living at the house, Lowen starts to realize that everything is not as it seems. In the latter third of the novel, what did you think was about to happen? Were your suspicions confirmed at the novel's end?

17. Compare and contrast Verity and Lowen's personalities. How are the two women similar to one another? How are they different? Why do you think Jeremy was drawn to both women?

18. Just before Lowen finishes reading Verity's autobiography, she wonders if she has a moral obligation to share the pages with Jeremy. In your opinion, at that moment in time in the story, do you believe it was right for Lowen not to share her findings? What would you have done if you had been in Lowen's situation?

19. Verity's name is derived from the Latin word *veritas*, meaning truth. Lowen, on the other hand, is derived from the Middle High German *lewe*, meaning lion, a name associated with bravery. Do you think the author was being ironic in her choice of names here? Or do you think each woman lived up to her name's expectations? Why?

20. After finishing the novel, are you #TeamManuscript or #TeamLetter? Whose truth was the lie?

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