

Book Club Discussion Guide

1. What is Kersti's relationship like with her family? Why does she feel like an outcast? How does this feeling continue throughout the novel? Does it evolve over time?
2. Describe Jay's relationship with Kersti. What is it like at the beginning of the story, versus at the end?
3. What does the Lycée represent for Kersti and her friends? How does this change throughout the story?
4. Do you think Kersti and her friends, and possibly the other students, handled their problems very well? What could they have done differently? What would you do if you were left at a boarding school in another country?
5. Do you think Kersti's relationship with her family would be different if she had been able to have children the conventional way? How does her infertility reflect her relationship with her family?
6. Would you say that, even though their situation was special, the feelings and experiences that Kersti and her friends went through at Lycée were normal? How are they similar to what a student at a public school would have gone through?
7. Most, if not all, of the students are from wealthy families, except for Kersti. Would you say that this has set her apart from the other students? Is she able to experience school the same way the others do despite her family's more modest lifestyle?
8. Kersti and Cressida had a very complicated friendship. Is it healthy? Does it seem different at the end of the story?
9. Kersti seems to be pretty desperate to get to the bottom of the mystery of Cressida's fall. Would you have continued to push for a conclusion? Do you think what she did was healthy, even if the way she went about doing it might not have been?
10. What do you make of Hamidou's attempts to rationalize what she did? She says everything was consensual, and is even married to one of her victims. Does this change what she did, as opposed to if she had not married a victim?
11. Angela's character is barely mentioned, but she plays a very integral part of the story. What do you make of her? Do you think that if Hamidou hadn't assaulted her she would be a different person? Would you say she acted out of love or desperation?
12. Do you think that Kersti and her friends actually achieve any kind of closure at the end of the story? Will knowing what happened alter their lives in any way?

13. At the end, Kersti tells Cressida that she knows what happened at Lycée. Do you think that Cressida knew what she meant? Kersti wonders if Cressida will die soon and thinks about what kind of life she is leading now. Do you think the state of life Cressida has is better than not being alive at all?