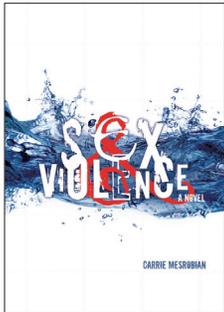




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Sex & Violence

Carrie Mesrobian

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CARRIE MESROBIAN

AT FIRST YOU DON'T SEE THE CONNECTION.

Sex has always come without consequences for seventeen-year-old Evan Carter. He has a strategy—knows the profile of The Girl Who Would Say Yes. In each new town, each new school, he can count on plenty of action before he and his father move again. Getting down is never a problem. Until he hooks up with the wrong girl and finds himself in the wrong place at very much the wrong time.

AND THEN YOU CAN'T SEE ANYTHING ELSE.

After an assault that leaves Evan bleeding and broken, his father takes him to the family cabin in rural Pearl Lake, Minnesota, so Evan's body can heal. But what about his mind?

HOW DO YOU GO ON, WHEN YOU CAN'T THINK OF ONE WITHOUT THE OTHER?

Nothing seems natural to Evan anymore. Nothing seems safe. The fear—and the guilt—are inescapable. He can't sort out how he feels about anyone, least of all himself. Evan's never really known another person well, and Pearl Lake is the kind of place where people know everything about each other—where there might be other reasons to talk to a girl. It's all annoying as hell. It might also be Evan's best shot to untangle

SEX AND VIOLENCE.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What about Collette surprises and intrigues Evan right away? How is she different from the kinds of girls he usually hooks up with?
2. In his first letter to Collette, Evan says that the incident at Remington Chase cost him a “spleen and a left ear and a broken nose and ribs. More stuff too...” What else has he lost?
3. Evan avoids picking a “Last Chance” activity but finally settles on one. What does his choice reveal about what he wants and what he's been missing?
4. What do you think of Baker's rules? Find one you agree with and one you disagree with. Does Evan feel the same way you do?
5. Why is Baker upset that Jim hooked up with Conley, despite Baker's non-monogamy rules for the summer? How is Evan's perspective different?
6. Evan is disturbed by the possibility that his mother was involved with his uncle before his parents were married. What parallels does he draw between his own behavior and the way his father might've acted in that situation?
7. Contrast the way Evan's father handles Evan's trauma with the approach Layne and Tim take.
8. According to Evan [in chapter twelve], how are the rules of fighting similar to the rules of sex?
9. Evan is surprised by the changes in his father's behavior. What does this show about the way Evan sees/evaluates people? What does it show about his father?
11. When Baker first kisses Evan, why does Evan not respond? What are his feelings about Baker? What has made him think they could never get together?
12. Do you think Baker is “abnormal”? Why or why not? What does Evan think?
13. Baker tells Evan that he's “such a dork about people sometimes. Like you can just tell what people are like by how they look.” What's one example of Evan's first impressions being completely off-base? What about a time when his judgments turned out to be right?
14. Compare Harry's birthday party to the parties on the east side of the lake. Where is Evan more comfortable, and why?
15. Although Evan's run-in with Randy Garrington ends badly for Evan, how is the aftermath different from the attack in the Connison shower?
16. Do you think that, if the timing and circumstances had been different, Evan and Baker could've been a successful couple? Why or why not?
17. Why do you think Evan is willing to stick with Jordan, despite her problems, after years of avoiding real intimacy with anyone?
18. Dr. Penny tells Evan, “You have to like [Jordan] for her, not as if you're righting a wrong.” How do Evan's thoughts and behavior show that he does like Jordan for herself?
19. How is having sex with Jordan different from Evan's previous experiences? In what way is it disappointing? In what way is it exactly what he wants?
20. Soren is a firm believer in cycles. How does Evan's time in Pearl Lake and Marchant Falls fit into the pattern of his past life? How has he broken the pattern?
21. The Cupcake Lady of Tacoma is Evan's last big secret. Why do you think he's refused to talk about her for so long? What does this story reveal or explain about Evan that wasn't as clear before?
22. Do you think Collette will answer Evan's letters? What might she say?

