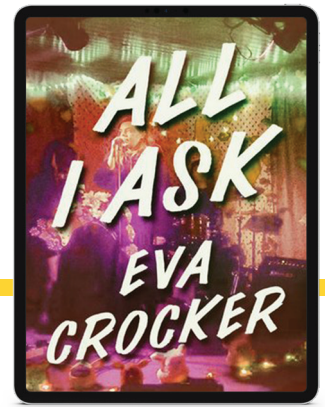


August 11-25, 2021

Book club discussion guide

1. The novel begins with a disorienting scene at Stacey's house. How does this chaotic introduction set the tone for the rest of the narrative?
2. Immediately after the opening scene, the novel describes a court case involving police officer Doug Snelgrove. This is a real case that occurred in St. John's in 2017, in which Constable Snelgrove was found not guilty. What is the significance of including this real event in an otherwise fictional narrative? How would this scene read differently if the event were fictionalized? What connections are being drawn between the Snelgrove verdict and Stacey's interactions with the police?
3. Digital communication and internet privacy are recurring topics throughout the novel, Stacey's interactions with strangers on Chatroulette and her online conversations with older men in the music community as a teenager. What does the novel suggest about relationships made through digital communication? Does Stacey have agency in these interactions, or are they inherently predatory? Is privacy possible online?
4. While criticizing the cops, Stacey repeats the idea that, though they violated her privacy, they "would have treated [her] a lot shittier if [she] didn't look like [her], like a middle-class, cis white girl" (25). How does Stacey's identity influence her interactions with the police and others in her community?
5. Most of Stacey's friends from acting school move to Toronto to pursue their careers. Why do you think that Stacey stays in St. John's, despite her frequent references to the city's unemployment issues? Did you feel optimistic about Stacey's acting career at the end of the novel?
6. Stacey repeatedly draws the readers' attention to the coughing woman who sits on the church steps near her and Holly's apartment, and she often tries to gauge the woman's response to the novel's events: "I tried to find a reaction to it in her face: judgment or commiseration or even curiosity, but she gave me the same neighbourly nod as always" (96-7). What is the significance of the woman's constant presence, and why is Stacey so attentive to her?
7. Stacey describes Holly as being Viv's friend but never hers, even after they move in together. How does Stacey's relationship with Holly change over the course of the novel? Is there a potential friendship suggested at the novel's end?
8. Stacey often forgets that the police have taken her phone when she instinctively tries to check the time or contact someone. Considering that Stacey is often unsure of what time or day it is and loses touch with her friends, how does her not having a phone influence the pace of the narrative as well as her own wellbeing?
9. In the Mark's Work Warehouse scene, when Stacey does not want to confront the man who tricked her into applying for a credit card, Kris tells Stacey that she "let[s] people push [her] around" (257). Is Kris's characterization of Stacey accurate? Where else do you see Stacey letting people boss her around in the novel? Where does she act contrary to this characterization?



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- 10.** Stacey often delays telling people important information, such as informing Holly about the police coming to their apartment. When Constable Joe Michael calls her at work, she considers not telling Kris, since “[i]t seemed like the sort of thing that could maybe be undone if you never ever mentioned it to another person” (282). Why do you think Stacey reacts this way to stressful encounters? Does her approach change during the novel?
- 11.** After Stacey’s conversation with Officer Bradley, in which he tries to verbally resolve her complaint, Stacey feels that the issue is still not settled but does not request further review because the case is closed (291). Why doesn’t she pursue it? Does Stacey have a responsibility to file a complaint, like Kris suggested (249)? If so, has she fulfilled this responsibility?
- 12.** Two similar scenes occur in which pizza is mistakenly delivered to Stacey and Holly’s apartment, first Mary Brown’s (153) and later Domino’s (299). What is the effect of the novel having these two similar incidents? What do Stacey’s reactions to these scenes tell you about whether she has evolved as a character? **13.** The novel ends with the realization that Stacey and Holly’s apartment has had a carbon monoxide leak for a while. How does the physical space of Holly and Stacey’s apartment, including the leak influence the narrative and their relationship? Consider Kris’s repeated assertions that she could not breathe in Stacey’s room and Dave King’s claim that he could smell the gas.