



# BOOK CLUB KIT

# DISCUSSION

1

On page 122, Evelyn thinks this about herself: "paint yourself dark and angry and pretend you could be." What masks does Evelyn wear throughout the novel? Why do you think she adopts these various masks?

2

McNair Falls is a small, poor town and Evelyn, Reid, and Ashton react to that differently. How does their environment impact each of the characters and what role does poverty, wealth and socioeconomic status play in that?

3

Do you think Evelyn was justified in trying to burn down the trailer in Act 1? What about her actions in Act 3? How do you think the events of the book will impact Evelyn going forward?

4

How does Evelyn's encounter with Reid when Reid picks her up on the side of the road in the beginning of Act 2 affect their relationship throughout the novel? How does it shape the way both Evelyn and Reid see each other?

5

Reid and Ashton often describe their relationship as love. What do you think about that? Were Reid and Ashton in love? Could their relationship have continued if they made changes?



6

How did you ultimately end up feeling about Savannah, as viewed through the eyes of the different characters? How much of her actions do you think are due to the environment she grew up in? Is Savannah a bad person?

7

Do you believe Evelyn's mother would have ultimately defended Evelyn like she suggested at the end? What effect did Dane's abusive behavior have on Evelyn's mother?

8

What was Reid's ultimate goal? If Reid had lived, would she have left McNair Falls? Why do you think so much of her own narration is spent lying to the reader? Was she also lying to herself?

9

How do Ashton and Evelyn's perceptions of Reid hurt her and themselves throughout the book? How might things have unfolded if Reid were still alive?

10

Each of the three acts has a name - Kerosene, Keeper of the Flame, and Gunpowder & Lead. Why do you think each of the acts was structured so differently and what did these markers mean? How did the structure affect your reading?

I CAN'T HELP TRYING TO  
SURVIVE. DO YOU KNOW HOW  
HARD IT IS TO KILL THAT  
INSTINCT?

# INTERVIEW WITH LAURIE DEVORE

## **What inspired you to write *A Better Bad Idea*?**

I grew up as a huge fan of country music and that was the inspiration for this book. Each of the acts is named after a Miranda Lambert song and her song "Gunpowder & Lead" sparked the idea of the book.

## **Who was your favorite character to write?**

The only answer for this is Reid. She gets all the best zingers! She is also deeply complicated - while on the surface, her actions may seem cruel, much of what she does is deeply motivated by her own sense of insecurity and not fitting in with her peers in McNair Falls.

## **What was your favorite scene to write?**

It is a quieter moment, but my favorite scene is probably the one between Alex and Evelyn on his patio. I think there's such a complex history playing out in subtle moments between the two and it is one of my favorite scenes to revisit.



## **What inspired the setting of this book?**

My hometown! I love writing about the south because I think it has become such a cliché setting in pop culture, when in reality, the south is a rich, diverse place with so many layers to peel back. I like to think my books represent the New South.

## **What surprised you most about writing this book?**

The ending. I had envisioned that a book with so much darkness would have a fairly bleak ending that spoke about the difficulty of breaking out of poverty and the cycle of abuse. However, ultimately, I found a hopeful ending to be more satisfying for Evelyn, especially since Reid's ending was so tied up in the difficulty of escaping small towns.



## GRANNY'S CHOCOLATE PUDDING PIE

Either use a graham cracker pie crust from the store or make your own with crushed graham crackers and melted butter. You push this firmly in a pie dish.

Make chocolate pudding according to the package directions and just pour into the pie crust. Let it sit and chill. YUM!

## A BETTER BAD IDEA PLAYLIST



THIS YEAR	THE MOUNTAIN GOATS
BEST YEARS OF MY LIFE	PISTOL ANNIES
BETTER BAD IDEA	SUNNY SWEENEY
WALK THROUGH FIRE	YOLA
RAISE HELL	DOROTHY
BLUEBIRD	MIRANDA LAMBERT
LEAVING & LONELY	TURNPIKE TROUBADOURS
LOVER	TAYLOR SWIFT
GIRL GOIN' NOWHERE	ASHELY MCBRYDE
LOVE SONG	LANA DEL REY
RIVER	LEON BRIDGES
GETAWAY CAR	TAYLOR SWIFT
LANDSLIDE	THE CHICKS
I'LL ONLY BREAK YOUR	HOLLY WILLIAMS
HEART	
GUN IN MY HAND	DOROTHY
HANG IN THERE GIRL	ASHLEY MCBRYDE

# EXTRAS

# RESOURCES

On average, nearly twenty people per minute are abused by an intimate partner in the United States—equating to more than ten million women and men each year.

If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic violence or abuse, for anonymous, confidential help, 24/7, please call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or 1-800-787-3224 (TTY).

If you are afraid that you might hurt yourself or are feeling suicidal, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline provides 24/7 free, confidential support over the phone at 1-800-273-8255 or online at [suicidepreventionlifeline.org](https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org). You can also utilize the following online resources for info and assistance:

- The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence ([ncadv.org](https://ncadv.org))
- The National Domestic Violence Hotline ([thehotline.org](https://thehotline.org))
- National Child Abuse Hotline/Childhelp ([childhelp.org](https://childhelp.org))
- The National Institute of Mental Health website ([nimh.nih.gov](https://nimh.nih.gov))
- The National Runaway Safeline ([1800runaway.org](https://1800runaway.org))

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Laurie Devore was born and raised in small town South Carolina and graduated from Clemson University. After four years in the balmy Midwest, she returned to her home in the south, where she now lives and works in Charleston. In her spare time, she hangs out with her dog, Wrigley, watches too much TV, and works a “y’all” into every conversation. She is the author of *A Better Bad Idea*, *Winner Take All*, and *How to Break a Boy*.



Laurie\_Devore



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**LAURIE DEVORE IS AVAILABLE TO CONNECT WITH YOUR BOOK CLUB OR CLASSROOM REMOTELY. PLEASE REACH OUT TO [LAURIE.DEVORE.AUTHOR@GMAIL.COM](mailto:Laurie.Devore.Author@gmail.com) FOR MORE INFORMATION.**