

Reading Group Guide for THE REAL LIDDY JAMES

1. Did you relate to Liddy? Why or why not?
2. In the beginning of *The Real Liddy James*, Liddy claims that she doesn't do guilt. How does this belief change as her life is turned upside down? Discuss in what ways this mentality helped her, and in what ways it hindered her. Do you have your own mantra that helps you get through the day?
3. What do you think of Rose's approach to Liddy and Peter's marriage? Do you think she should have behaved differently at any point in the novel? Why or why not?
4. Discuss Liddy's childhood. How has it shaped the woman she is?
5. On p. 38, Sophia asks Rose, "All of us with kids and a job are hovering on the edge of a nervous breakdown, right?" Do you think this is true? How do the different women in the novel choose to navigate parenting, working, and maintaining their own relationships? How do you navigate these things in your own life? Do you think that Liddy makes the right choice in the end?
6. How does Rose see Liddy in the beginning of the novel? How does Liddy feel about Rose? How does the way each woman understands the other change over time?
7. What do you think about Liddy and Peter's marriage? Why do you think Casey chooses to provide so much of their history? Did it change the way you felt about Liddy in the present day? Why or why not?
8. *The Real Liddy James* is, in part, a love story. Were you surprised by Sebastian and Liddy's connection? How did you feel about where things end with them? What do you think will happen to them in the future?
9. At one Peter tells Rose that "Liddy does appear to live in her own self-created reality. We all do it, of course, we all justify our particular choices to a greater or lesser extent; it's just for her it seems to be a matter of survival." Why do you think that Liddy creates her own reality? How do you think that this mentality helps her to survive? Was there a time in your own life in which creating your own reality helped you in some way?
10. The novel is set primarily in Manhattan. Do you think it could have been set elsewhere in the U.S.? Would the story be different if it did not take place in New York City?
11. How does visiting Ireland change Liddy? Have you ever felt a similar need to escape? If so, where did you go and how did it affect you?