

Book Club Questions

1. What scene stuck with you the most and why?
2. What do you consider the book's main theme? Is there a specific scene that best shows this theme?
3. How does the legacy of family impact the next generation?
4. What are the dangers of letting shame or unforgiveness fester?
5. What do you think this book is saying about the ambiguity of taking a life?
6. Is it ever morally okay to take a life? If so, when? And if so, what prevents this yes from being applied to every circumstance?
7. What major lesson do you think Lynell, Daniel, and Zach learned through these fourteen days? Do you relate to any of these lessons?
8. Should the father ever have a say in whether or not to keep a child? If yes, when?
9. Does ultimate power truly corrupt completely or is there a way to fight that?
10. Is there anything or anyone you would be willing to suffer and/or die for?

Author Q&A

1. What inspired this book?

After I finished another novel, *The Run*, which was birthed out of grief, fear, and anger about the 2016 election, I continued to think about other political actions that caused these emotions. Two issues continually came to mind and seemed to be reflected in social and political events. The first was the death penalty and the second was the seemingly vicious argument surrounding abortion. I have very strong personal opinions about both, but what caused the true grief, fear, and anger in me was how these opinions influenced all of my relationships. I noticed how easily I lost trust in someone after finding out their thoughts. This made me want to write a book where both are completely legal, which turned into murder is legal no matter the circumstance, and how this sort of law would impact relationships, particularly familial relationships.

2. Are there real-life models to your characters?

Yes, definitely. Mostly I just named some characters after my friends (Such as Zoe, Josh, and Alexander) but personalities also shine through. The most obvious of which is Daniel, who was loosely modeled after my father.

3. Is there any major part of the final manuscript you never planned on including?

DANIEL! I had absolutely NO plan on including Daniel's character in this book. Lynell was originally going to be completely alone for the entirety of the novel. However, he seemed to force himself into the story. I couldn't stop thinking about him and found I needed to tell his story as much as I needed to tell Lynell's.

4. How do you research your book(s)?

The almighty Google. But, if I'm honest, the majority of my research involved calling family members. In particular, my brother-in-law received quite a few late-night phone calls that went like this:

Me- "Hey, would [insert extreme wound here] kill you?"

CJ- "Absolutely. Planning another murder?"

Me- "Yes. What should I change the wound to if I don't want you to die but I do want to cause extreme pain?"

CJ- "[Insert a few gruesome suggestions here]."

Me- "Thanks. Bye!"

5. Do you have plans to write a sequel?

If by plans you mean I already have the first draft written then yes, yes, I do. However, I'm also considering some other sequel ideas before pursuing publishing the drafted sequel.

6. If this book had a playlist, what songs would be on it?

This book actually DOES have a playlist! You can listen to it by visiting my Spotify (@madisonlawson96) and opening the playlist titled “The Registration.”

But the most important songs on the playlist are these:

- As Long As You Love Me by Sleeping At Last
- Whispers by Halsey
- Villains by Johnnyswim
- Out of the Woods by King & Country
- you should see me in a crown by Billie Eilish
- Why Do You Love Me by Charlotte Lawrence
- Let Me Live / Let Me Die by Des Rocs
- Carry Your Throne by Jon Bellion

7. The theme of family is so prevalent in this book. What about the theme moved you?

In almost everything I’ve ever written; family has been a theme. In my first book, *The Run*, family is the main theme because I wanted to figure out which type of family has a stronger pull on someone: blood or chosen. In *The Registration*, I had a similar question I needed answered: How resilient are family bonds and what sort of duty do we have to family members? I think what moves me about this is that there doesn’t seem to be a clear-cut answer. It all depends on the individual and the situation. And while I want to believe that blood family doesn’t mean anything beyond genetics unless we give it meaning, there does seem to be a sort of pull there, whether we want it or not.

8. What would you consider the key theme of this book?

I’m hesitant to answer this because there are so many. But what I think is the key theme isn’t necessarily what readers would say. And I don’t want to influence any reader and risk distracting them from the theme, lesson, or question that *they* need to find and wrestle with.

9. What is the hardest part about being a writer? What was the most challenging part of writing *The Registration*?

Honestly just the act of writing.

Weirdly enough, this is also the *easiest* part of being a writer. It’s easy because it’s what I love to do and when I’m invested in my story and my characters, the words just flow right out.

But it’s the hardest because I’m a flawed human with ADHD, PTSD, and a crazy busy schedule. My ADHD makes it difficult to write when I’m not obsessed with a scene and, oddly enough, it makes describing locations SO difficult. That was probably the most challenging part of writing *The Registration*. Creating and describing settings that are realistic, fit the story, and that I can

explain. You see, I can't see these places in my head due to the aphantasia symptoms that come with ADHD, so it takes twice as long to design and remember building layouts.

Similarly, PTSD and a busy schedule mean several days can pass when I don't touch my books. Either I'm not in the headspace or I don't have time or I'm just exhausted and can't be bothered. I used to read articles and advice to new writers and almost every single one had some variation of "write every day." This was incredibly discouraging because I had several days I just could not write for the life of me. It took a while to learn that a day when I didn't write was not a wasted day. Sometimes, the best you can do is survive and that's okay.

10. What is your favorite passage in this book and why?

Without a doubt my favorite passage is towards the end of Day 13 when young Lynell is speaking with Elizabeth. At the risk of spoiling anything, Lynell asks her mother if her dad will ever come save her. Elizabeth's answer is: "He will. But it won't be how you expect. He'll come through your eyes, through your mind, through your heart. He'll come through you and you'll save yourself and it'll be that much sweeter."

I know I wrote it, so this feels slightly prideful to say, but those lines get to me every single time. My dad was an incredible man who was always there for us girls. I knew he would ALWAYS be there for me. But he also made a point to teach us how to be there for ourselves. He taught us independence and encouraged us to be who we are, and not who others expect us to be. He also drilled in us the importance of emotional intelligence. And after he died, this became even more important. Because my dad won't be there for me when I need him anymore. He won't answer my phone call or hug me when I'm sad.

As King T'Chaka said, "A man who has not prepared his children for his own death has failed as a father." My dad did not fail. He succeeded in everything he did, including preparing us girls, despite his death being sudden and unexpected.

But he didn't leave me alone. Yes, I still have my mom and sisters and friends, but perhaps even more importantly, I have myself. And I know how to comfort myself, how to save myself, and how to stand up for myself.