



BOOK CLUB KIT

A LETTER FROM THE AUTHOR

Dear Reader,

I was never much of a photographer, myself.

I did buy a digital SLR once and spent a couple years lugging that thing around taking pictures of anything that would stay still long enough (and a lot of things that wouldn't). I liked the photography. I hated editing. There was something about spending all those hours huddled over my laptop picking away at the white balance that made my anxiety go brr.

But what I did like was walking away with these moments frozen in time: a landscape, my dog trying to eat his own foot, one of my friends laughing. I liked being able to relive things, and to share those tiny experiences with anyone who might look.

It reminded me of writing.

While writing *A Shot in the Dark*, I kept trying to capture each moment on the page as clearly as if I'd snapped a picture of it on my old Nikon. What was the exact way it felt to realize the person you wanted was completely out of reach? How can I describe the gnaw of desire, or fear, or guilt, so that anyone who reads this book can live in that emotion alongside me like it's real and not just ink on paper?

The idea for this book emerged from the Frankensteinian combination of my desire to write about addiction and a really hot TikTok my friends sent me one night. The rest of the narrative grew around that core, expanding it until the book was an actual story, not just a mess of scene ideas and feelings.

The words on the page of a book might be the same for everyone, but every reader will experience a book differently. You'll bring your own experiences and hopes and fears and dreams to bear, and so the way you live in Ely and Wyatt's minds won't be the way that I do. But I still know that we will, for a moment, share a connection across time and space as we experience their story together. And I hope you enjoy it.

Victoria

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Eli and Wyatt evolve throughout the novel, rediscovering themselves along the journey they share. In what ways did they grow individually and as a pair? Can you name a scene that marked a distinct moment of character growth for each of them?
2. Were you surprised when Wyatt was revealed to be Ely's professor? What do you think about how they handled that situation? Would you have done it any differently?
3. Addiction and recovery are major themes in *A Shot in the Dark*. How do Eli and Wyatt navigate their struggles with addiction? Are there any similarities? Differences? How do they help each other?
4. Throughout the story, Eli struggles with the intersection of her identities as a queer Jewish woman. Discuss her experiences throughout the novel. In what ways does Ely feel like she's not "enough" in these identities? How does she come to learn that she was always "enough"? Did you relate to Ely in anyway? Explore your own identities and how they may influence each other.
5. Both Eli and Wyatt are passionate about art. How did art and photography shape their characters? Did you connect to any of their projects? Why or why not? Take a moment and think about what your own photography project would be about.
6. Ely and Wyatt have a tough history with their biological families, but they've also found their own family in adulthood. Discuss the theme of family throughout the novel. Do you relate to either of their experiences? If so, how did you navigate it?
7. There are a lot of heavy topics to explore in this story, but there's also a lot of joy and celebration. Discuss your favorite scene and why!
8. There are plenty of fun and interesting side characters in *A Shot in the Dark*. Who was your favorite and why?
9. What do you think is in store for Eli and Wyatt's future? What actors would you cast as Eli and Wyatt if you were directing the film adaptation?

MATZO BALL SOUP

Ingredients

4 eggs
Dill
Parsley
¼ cup schmaltz
1–1.5 cups matzo meal
1 tsp. baking powder
¼ cup chicken broth
Saffron, cloves, ginger
Carrots
Onion

Combine first six in the list plus salt pepper and make into balls (pretty small, they expand). Keep in fridge until ready. Boil broth with the rest of it until veggies are tender. (Homemade broth is far superior.) Drop in matzo balls and cook until they are expanded and floatin'. Yum!



BRISKET

Ingredients

4 lb. brisket (point cut)
2–3 tbsp. schmaltz
10 garlic cloves
Sweet paprika, Lawry's
seasoning salt
Carrots, onion, frozen peas

Preheat oven to 300°F. Brown the meat in a Dutch oven using a small amount of oil or schmaltz. Add onions with another 1–2 tablespoons of schmaltz, Lawry's, a hefty dose of paprika, and minced garlic. Cover in foil and cook in oven for 2 hours. Add chopped carrot then cook another 1 hour until tender. Remove meat and veggies from pot, blend the juices with an immersion blender to make them into a thick gravy. Then return meat/veggies and add peas. Simmer until the peas are cooked sufficient. Serve with mashed potatoes or noodles.



VICTORIA'S FAVORITE NYC SPOTS!



THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY ON THE UPPER WEST SIDE

They always have really interesting and elaborate exhibits on subjects ranging from evolution to gemstones to a massive ant farm.

UNDER THE HELL GATE BRIDGE IN ASTORIA PARK

You can see such an amazing view of the East River and Manhattan from here while engaging in my favorite hobby: dogspotting.

GANTRY PLAZA STATE PARK IN LONG ISLAND CITY

This park has a long, beautiful dock that stretches out into the East River. The views are great, but it's also just a really nice place to hang out, grab a taco from one of the food trucks, and listen to some music.

CITY RELIQUARY MUSEUM IN BROOKLYN

This museum has a bunch of unusual and fascinating artifacts from historical New York, like an old subway turnstile and memorabilia from the World Fair.

PLAYLIST

[Listen here on Spotify!](#)

“BACK IN TOWN” by Florence + The Machine

“WHAT OTHER PEOPLE SAY” by Sam Fischer, Demi Lovato

“IN MY HEAD” by Maisie Peters

“CRUEL SUMMER” by Taylor Swift

“HAPPIER THAN EVER” by Billie Eilish

“DANCING WITH THE DEVIL” by Demi Lovato

“THE CURSE OF THE BLACKENED EYE” by Orville Peck

“ANTI-HERO” by Taylor Swift

“FREE” by Florence + The Machine

“THIS YEAR” by The Mountain Goats

“ORPHEUS” by Sara Bareilles

“STRAY ITALIAN GREYHOUND” by Vienna Teng

“THE NIGHT STARTS HERE” by Stars

“LECHA DODI” by Batya Levine