

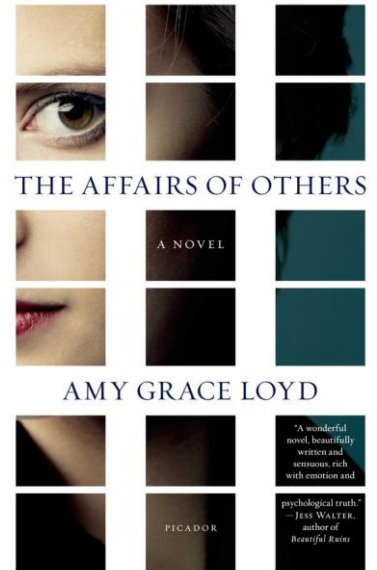
PICADOR

Reading Group Gold

The Affairs of Others

by Amy Grace Loyd

1. When we first meet Celia she tells us that her husband died five years ago, and "I went with him, or a lot of me did" (2). What does Celia mean here? What kind of life is she living at the beginning of the novel?
2. Hope brings about an immediate change in the building when she arrives. What do we learn about Hope from Celia's first impression of her? Why is Celia so hesitant to let Hope live in the building?
3. Discuss the different ways that Celia and Hope deal with their respective grief. Do their actions make sense in light of what's happened to them, or are they simply impulsive and reckless?
4. Hope's old boyfriend Les is a polarizing presence in the novel. Celia initially describes him as a "terrifying and bitterly handsome giant" (31). Why is Hope so drawn to him? What does Celia understand about Les and how does that influence the confrontations she has with him?
5. For most of the book Celia's tenant on the fourth floor, the retired ferry captain Mr. Coughlan, is missing. What role does his character play in the novel? What do Celia and the other tenants learn from Coughlan when he does return?
6. Celia and Hope's relationship takes on a new dimension late in the novel. What do the women gain from each other? How do you see their relationship evolving?
7. At one point Celia asks, "Why shouldn't the past...be as real as anything else?" (139). What does Celia do to make this true for her own life? Does Celia's attitude about the past change by the end of the book?
8. One of the many themes in the novel is the varying degrees of privacy and intimacy in our lives, especially for people living in close proximity to one another. Discuss the different ways that privacy is either protected or violated in the novel. How is intimacy achieved in this story? Is it always connected to physical space?
9. The novel begins and ends with a party scene. Compare Celia in the first party and the last. How has she changed? What do you think will happen to her after the final scene?
10. How does the style of Amy Grace Loyd's writing fit the nature of the story? Discuss your favorite lines and why they were meaningful to you.



About the Author

Amy Grace Loyd is an executive editor at Byliner Inc. and was the fiction and literary editor at *Playboy* magazine. A recipient of both MacDowell and Yaddo fellowships, she lives in Brooklyn, New York.



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Reading group guide written by Amy Grace Loyd