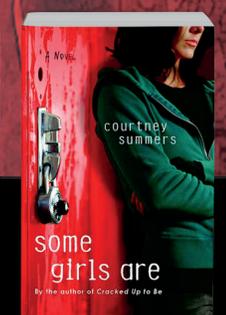
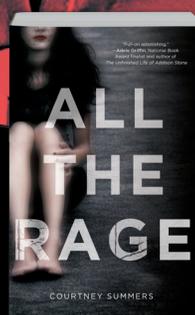
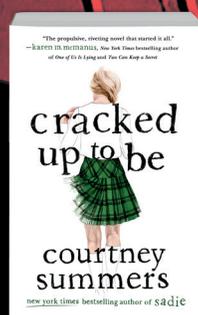
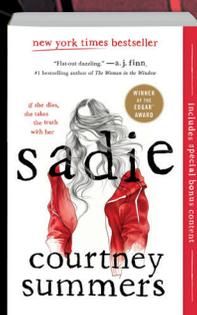
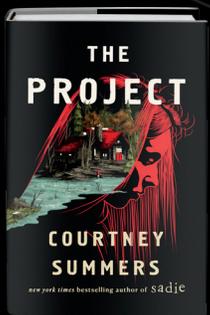


Discussion Guides to the Award-Winning Works of
COURTNEY SUMMERS



PHOTO CREDIT: MEGAN GUNTER



"Brave and raw and exciting and wise."

—MELISSA ALBERT, bestselling author of *The Hazel Wood Series*

"Masterful and devastating.

Trust me: there is no flaw in *The Project*."

—SOMAIYA DAUD, bestselling author of *Mirage*

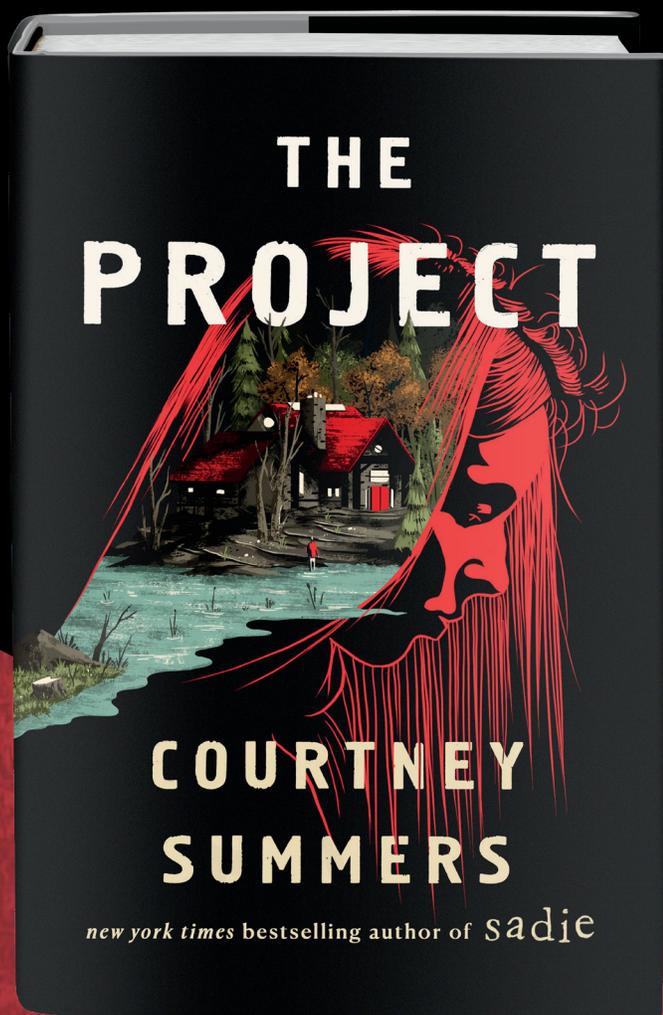
"A beautiful, thrilling testament to love.

Compelling. A baptism for your soul."

—MAURENE GOO, author of *Somewhere Only We Know*

"Completely electrifying from start to finish."

—KARA THOMAS, author of *The Cheerleaders*



Lo Denham is used to being on her own. After her parents died, Lo's sister, Bea, joined The Unity Project, leaving Lo in the care of their great aunt. Thanks to its extensive charitable work and community outreach, The Unity Project has won the hearts and minds of most in the Upstate New York region, but Lo knows there's more to the group than meets the eye. She's spent the last six years of her life trying to prove it.

THE PROJECT

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What were your thoughts and feelings about cults before you started *The Project*? Did they change after you finished reading?
2. What is Bea's greatest vulnerability and how does Lev exploit it to get her to join The Unity Project? Toward the end of the novel, does Bea harness this same vulnerability in a way that inspires her to leave?
3. How did the car accident, and Bea's subsequent abandonment, shape Lo's perspective of the world around her, her interactions with other people—Paul, Lauren, Lev—and her emotional responses to the situations she finds herself in?
4. Do you think it appealed to members' better natures or their worst?
5. What aspects of The Unity Project do you find appealing, and would they be enough to make you consider joining?
6. In their interviews together, how does Lev take control of the conversation from Lo, and how do their resulting encounters impact Lo's behavior afterward?
7. In what subtle or overt ways does Lev keep close watch on and manipulate his followers?
8. Why do you think it was in Lev's best interest that Lo join The Unity Project?
9. When Lo meets Rob and Father Michael and they expose Lev and The Project's many contradictions, and Father Michael remarks, "Once one thing is in doubt, the whole thing is in doubt." What parts of Lev's life, and aspects of The Unity Project, felt real and true to you? What parts feel like lies?
10. Do you think The Unity Project was all good or all bad?

"A riveting tour de force."

—KIRKUS REVIEWS

"It's impossible to not be drawn into this haunting thriller of a book. A heartrending must-have."

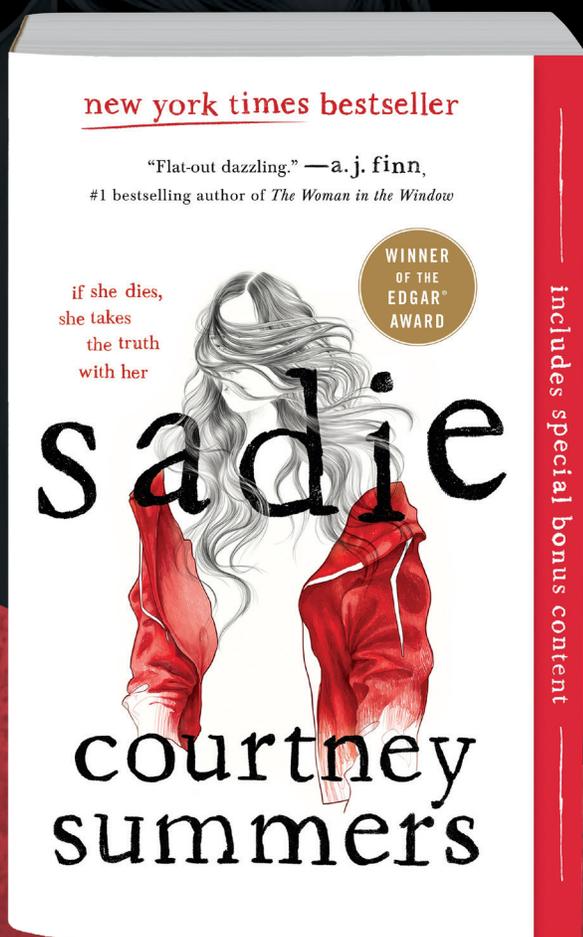
—SCHOOL LIBRARY JOURNAL

"A taut, suspenseful book about abuse and power."

—PUBLISHERS WEEKLY

"Summers has pulled no punches when it comes to diving into the darker side of teen lives."

—BUSTLE



When popular radio personality West McCray receives a desperate phone call from a stranger imploring him to find nineteen-year-old runaway Sadie Hunter, he's not convinced there's a story there; girls go missing all the time. But as soon as West's boss discovers Sadie fled home after the brutal murder of her little sister, Mattie, he sees the makings of something big and orders West to the small town of Cold Creek, Colorado, to uncover what happened.

SADIE

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In what ways does the dual narrative structure of *Sadie* add to the reading experience?
2. In the first episode of *The Girls*, how does the way West describes the town of Cold Creek set up the tone for the rest of the story?
3. What role do the towns Sadie passes through (Cold Creek, Montgomery, Langford, and Farfield) play in this story? Each town has a distinct description; what do these settings tell you?
4. How does the podcast element add to the overall story of *Sadie*?
5. Why do you think podcasts have taken listeners by storm? What do you think it is about them that appeals to listeners?
6. What forces are working against Sadie? What obstacles has she had to overcome in order to survive?
7. Out of all the people who Sadie comes across in her journey, which person (or people) do you think has the most effect on her? And who do you think Sadie affected the most; why?
8. What effect do you think the postcard from L.A. was supposed to have versus the actual effect it had on Sadie and Mattie? Do you think that the sender regretted sending the postcard?
9. What do you think Sadie would say to West if they ever met in person? Do you think she'd like him? Would she trust him with her story?
10. At the end of the book, what do you think happened to Sadie?

"The propulsive, riveting novel that started it all."

—KAREN M. MCMANUS, author of *One of Us is Lying*

"Right from the opening lines, that breathless hammering of beats that illustrate the terrifying and true experience of high school."

—NOVA REN SUMA, bestselling author of *The Walls Around Us*

"A blisteringly realistic exploration."

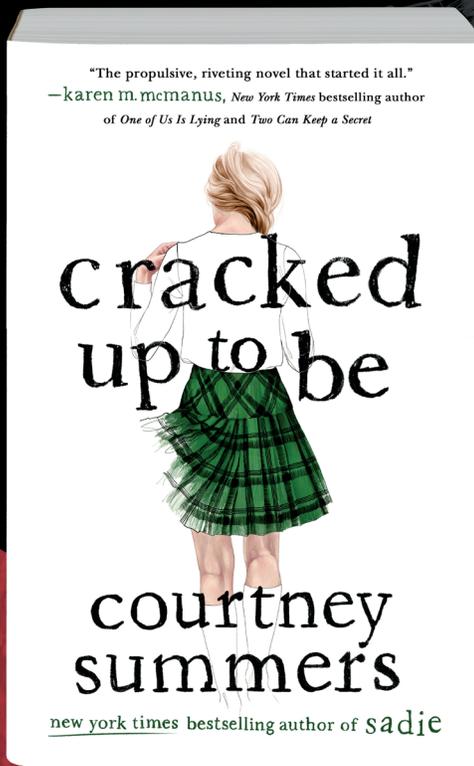
—BRANDY COLBERT, author of *The Revolution of Birdie Randolph*

"This book is a raw, exposed nerve."

—REBECCA BARROW, author of *This Is What It Feels Like*

"One of my favorite books of all time, absolutely riveting from first page to last."

—LAURIE DEVORE, author of *How to Break a Boy*



The high price of perfection is one 'Perfect' Parker Fadley always believed she was willing to pay, until the devastating events at a party during junior year fractures the lives of her family and friends. A terrible thing has happened and only Parker knows it's her fault. If being a perfect daughter, student, friend and girlfriend couldn't keep her from making an unforgivable mistake, Parker hopes becoming a perfect mess will at least keep her loved ones from discovering the truth—until the arrival of a curious new student and the unexpected return of an old enemy threaten her tenuous grip on control. Parker will do anything to keep her secret from surfacing . . . but this time the cost might be more than she can afford.

CRACKED UP TO BE

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever liked an “unlikable” female character? Why do you think female characters who defy certain expectations are often perceived or dismissed as “unlikable”?
2. Why do you think Chris and Becky stay friends with Parker when everyone else has moved on?
3. In the introduction, the author says, “Parker Fadley was determined to make sure everyone hated her.” Do you hate Parker? Does your opinion of her change throughout the book?
4. What do you think of Parker’s plan to alienate everyone? Does it work? Do you think Parker’s actions throughout the book are justified?
5. What do you think of the pressure teenagers—particularly young women—are under to be “perfect”? Is it helpful or harmful to hold them to certain standards?
6. Do you think the way Parker reveals what happened the night of Chris’s party is an effective way to tell her story? What does it suggest about Parker’s mental state?
7. Parker’s quest for perfection prevents her from speaking up when she’s struggling. Why is it important to be open about mental health? What would openness have changed for Parker? Could the adults around her have been more supportive?
8. What does Bailey bring out in Parker?
9. Why do you think Jake wanted to be part of Parker’s life? Do you think anything will happen between Parker and Jake in the future?
10. Where do you see Parker after the last page of the book? What steps do you think she’ll need to take to work through her guilt, accept the forgiveness and love of others, and allow herself a chance at happiness?

“The narrative never shies from its charged subject, and Summers portrays the unforgiving mindset of Grebe’s citizens with grim realism.”

—PUBLISHERS WEEKLY (Starred Review)

**“Smart, brutal, heartbreaking—
Courtney Summers is at her unflinching best.”**

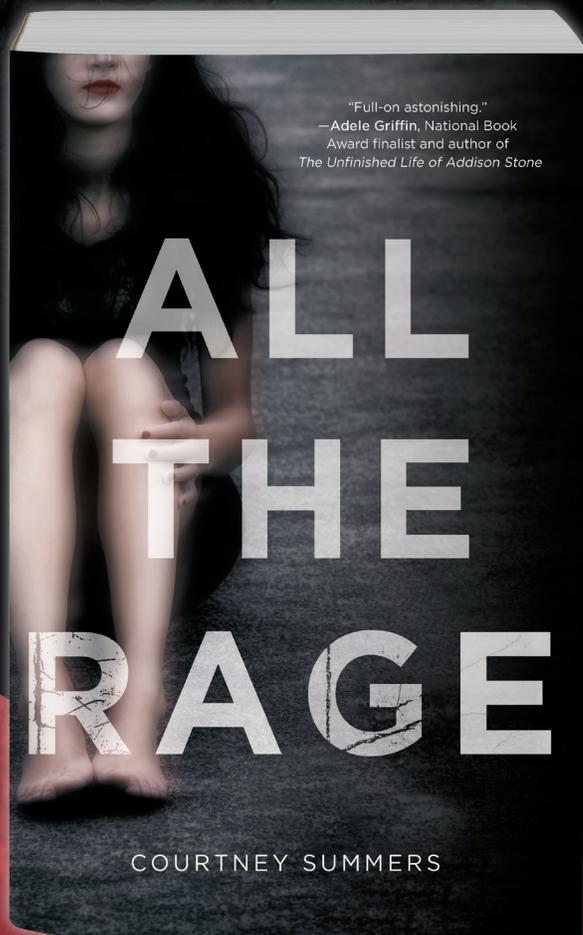
—BRENNA YOVANOFF, bestselling author of *The Replacement*

“Compellingly unpredictable.”

—NPR.COM

“Powerful and heartbreaking.”

—KODY KEPLINGER, author of *The DUFF*



The sheriff’s son, Kellan Turner, is not the golden boy everyone thinks he is, and Romy Grey knows that for a fact. Because no one wants to believe a girl from the wrong side of town, the truth about him has cost her everything. Branded a liar and bullied relentlessly by a group of kids she used to hang out with, Romy’s only refuge is the diner where she works outside of town where no one knows her name or her past there. But when a girl with ties to both Romy and Kellan goes missing after a party, and news of him assaulting another girl in a town close by gets out, Romy must decide whether she wants to fight or carry the burden of knowing more girls could get hurt if she doesn’t speak up. Nobody believed her the first time—and they certainly won’t now—but the cost of her silence might be more than she can bear.

ALL THE RAGE

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why does Romy remember her rape in third person?
2. What do the nail polish and lipstick symbolize? Why do you think the color red is significant?
3. What role does class/social status play when it comes to the way people treat Romy and whether or not they believe her?
4. How do people in Grebe discredit Romy?
5. What was Romy and Penny's friendship like before and after Romy's rape? Do you think Romy and Penny regret their falling out?
6. Are there differences in the ways the girls treat Romy compared to the boys?
7. How does Romy test Leon to see if he's safe? How does she use her relationship with Leon to cope with her trauma?
8. Why does Romy hope Caro's baby isn't a girl?
9. How does Paul's alcoholism affect Romy's life at home and in Grebe?
10. Romy and her mother work hard to protect each other's happiness but is it always to each other's benefit?
11. What are the differences in the way the community responds to Penny's disappearance compared to the way they respond to Romy's?
12. What do you think Romy mean when she calls Helen Turner "a woman who doesn't think about daughters she doesn't have?"
13. What are some examples of rape culture in the novel?
14. Where do you feel Romy is emotionally at the end of the novel, compared to the beginning? Do you think she is any closer to coming to terms with everything that has happened? What do you think is next for her?

“Both sexy and desolate, and it will blast a hole through your heart.”

—DAISY WHITNEY, author of *The Mockingbirds* and *The Rivals*

“Brought me to tears, caused me to gasp in shock in public places, and almost put a stop to my heart.”

—NOVA REN SUMA, author of *Imaginary Girls*

“Blends all the perfection and simplicity that defines her writing so well.”

—JULIE CROSS, author of *Tempest*

“Intriguing . . . Unusual and absorbing.”

—KIRKUS REVIEWS



It's the end of the world. Six students have taken cover in Cortège High but shelter is little comfort when the dead outside won't stop pounding on the doors. One bite is all it takes to kill a person and bring them back as a monstrous version of their former self. To Sloane Price, that doesn't sound so bad. Six months ago, her world collapsed and since then, she's failed to find a reason to keep going. Now seems like the perfect time to give up. As Sloane eagerly waits for the barricades to fall, she's forced to witness the apocalypse through the eyes of five people who actually want to live.

But as the days crawl by, the motivations for survival change in startling ways and soon the group's fate is determined less and less by what's happening outside and more and more by the unpredictable and violent bids for life—and death—inside. When everything is gone, what do you hold on to?

THIS IS NOT A TEST

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do you think was the cause of the zombie apocalypse?
2. Why do you think Lily ultimately chose to leave without Sloane?
3. Does Sloane's sense of betrayal prevent her from considering Lily's perspective and the violence she also endured at home?
4. The characters fall into certain types (The Brain, The Jock, etc.) at the beginning of the book. Have they subverted type by the end? How?
5. Do you think Cary was an effective leader for the group, or was Trace right to dislike him?
6. Why do you think Rhys is so furious at Sloane once he realizes she doesn't care if she lives or dies?
7. Do you think Mr. Baxter was bitten? Did the group handle his situation effectively?
8. Should the group have stayed in the school?
9. Why do you think Sloane chose not to kill her zombified father?
10. Do you think Sloane's perspective about life and death has changed at the end of the book?

**“An unusual, bold effort
that deserves attention.”**

—KIRKUS REVIEWS (Starred Review)

**“If you haven’t yet climbed aboard the
Summers bandwagon, now is the time.
A fearless and wonderfully
executed young adult novel.”**

—SCHOOL LIBRARY JOURNAL

**“Both hauntingly written and
compulsively readable.”**

—BOOKLIST (Starred Review)



When Eddie Reeves’s father commits suicide her life is consumed by the nagging question of why? Why when he was a legendary photographer and a brilliant teacher? Why when he seemed to find inspiration in everything he saw? And, most importantly, why when he had a daughter who loved him more than anyone else in the world? When she meets Culler Evans, former student of her father’s and a photographer himself, an instant and dangerous attraction begins. He seems to know more about her father than she does and could possibly hold the key to the mystery surrounding his death. But Eddie’s vulnerability has weakened her and Culler Evans is getting too close. Her need for the truth keeps her hanging on . . . but some questions may be left unanswered.

FALL FOR ANYTHING

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What kind of coping mechanisms do individual characters employ in the wake of the book's tragedy? Are they effective or ineffective?
2. As a society, do we discourage or embrace the grieving process? How might our attitudes impact people who have lost a loved one?
3. Do you think it was fair of Milo to withhold information from Eddie about the night her father died?
4. Eddie doesn't want people to divide her into "before and after." How do other people's perceptions of her help or hinder her healing?
5. How do you think other characters should have handled Eddie's grief?
6. Why was it so hard for Milo to tell Eddie what happened the night her father died?
7. What do you think Eddie hopes to accomplish by retracing her father's last moments?
8. Are Eddie's feelings toward Missy unreasonable? Why do you think Eddie's so jealous of her?
9. Have Eddie's feelings toward Beth changed by the end of the book?
10. Do you think Culler is a bad guy or do you think his treatment of Eddie was well-intentioned, if misguided?

“Powerful and compelling.”

—KIRKUS REVIEWS

**“Regina’s every emotion is palpable,
and it’s impossible not to feel every punch—
physical or emotional—she takes.”**

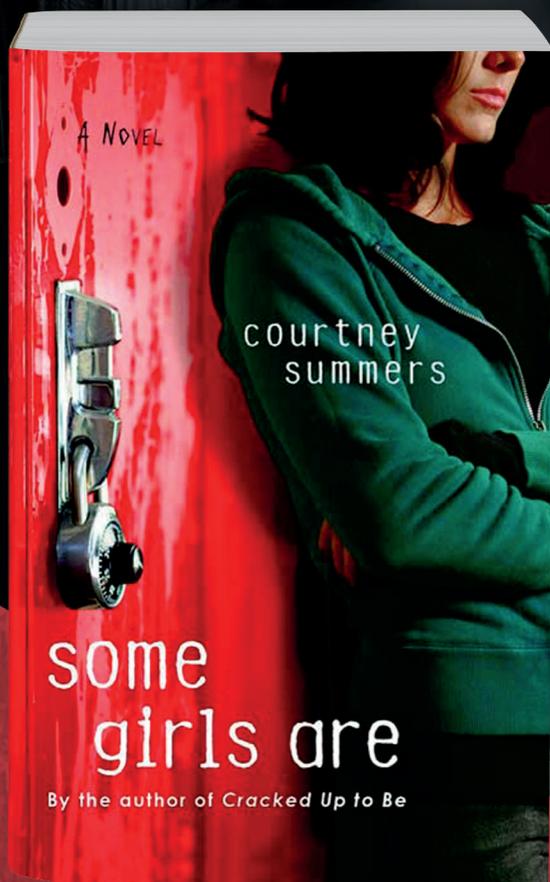
—PUBLISHERS WEEKLY (Starred Review)

**“Summers knows her way around bad girls . . .
a true page-turner.”**

—RT BOOK REVIEWS

**“An unflinching look at the intricacies
of high school relationships . . .
Fans of the film *Mean Girl* will enjoy
this tale of redemption and forgiveness.”**

—SCHOOL LIBRARY JOURNAL



Climbing to the top of the social ladder is hard—falling from it is even harder. Regina Afton used to be a member of the Fearsome Fivesome. And just like the other members of this all-girl clique, she was both feared and revered by the students of Hallowell High . . . that is until vicious rumors about her and her best friend’s boyfriend start going around. Now she’s been “frozen out” and her ex-friends are out for revenge. If Regina was guilty, it would be one thing, but the rumors are far from the terrifying truth, and the bullying is getting more intense by the day. Out of desperation, she takes solace in the companionship of Michael Hayden, a misfit with a tragic past who she herself used to bully. Friendship—and eventually romance—doesn’t come easily for these onetime enemies, and as Regina makes amends for her past, a bond begins to form, while threats from the Fearsome Foursome are poised to break them both.

SOME GIRLS ARE

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you think Kara's betrayal of Regina was inevitable?
2. Why do you think Anna chooses not to believe Regina about Donnie?
3. Did Anne feel genuinely threatened by Liz, or was destroying Regina's friendship with Liz ultimately about control?
4. The way Regina and her friends deal with their problems reflect a culture that discourages healthy ways for girls to express their anger. How can we more effectively encourage girls to accept, express, and healthily manage their anger?
5. Adults rarely intervene or are confided in throughout the course of this novel. Why do you think these characters would choose not to seek help from a parent or authority figure?
6. Why do you think Michael is compelled by Regina, and ultimately wants to have a relationship with her?
7. Which character do you relate to most?
8. Does it matter if readers forgive Regina for her past behavior, or should the people she's hurt have the final say?
9. Which characters do you think have forgiven Regina?
10. Do you think Regina's experiences with girl-bullying is a uniquely high school experience, or will it follow her later in life?

FURTHER DISCUSSION

The power of female relationships play a central role in Courtney Summers's work, particularly those between sisters (*This is Not a Test*, *Sadie*, and *The Project*). How are those bonds explored from book to book? Which do you most relate to?

Summers's work often examines the violence girls and women endure at the hands of a patriarchal society, in both overt and subtle ways. Are there any current events that reflect the issues written about in Summers's novels?

The female protagonists in Courtney Summers's novels are classically considered "unlikable." By committing to a portrayal of girls and women that isn't always "sugar and spice and everything nice," what do you think Summers is trying to say about the way we view and treat women? Do you think there's a double standard for the way we perceive male characters? What kind of impact do you think refusing the "nice girl" ideal will have on readers?

Courtney Summers's work is known for its unflinching and ruthless explorations of dark, hard-hitting subject matter—no happy endings guaranteed. Why is it so important for teen readers to pick up and explore these kinds of topics through fiction?

