

# SUCH A PRETTY SMILE

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### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Such a Pretty Smile* changes in both time period, setting, and point of view throughout the novel. How did these shifting perspectives change your feelings about the personal lives of Lila and Caroline? How did it change your feelings about the events surrounding The Cur? Is there one character or time period that resonated with you particularly? Why?
2. Three central characters—Lila, Caroline, and Beth—are all labeled as girls or women who will not conform. What are some other ways you have witnessed marginalized people being silenced or targeted for not conforming? What steps can we take to stop such actions and prevent them from going forward?
3. Examine Lila and Caroline's relationship. Were you able to see connections from Caroline in 2019 to Caroline in 2004? How did Caroline change over the years? Do you think she was there for Lila in the ways she needed to be?
4. Put yourself in Caroline's father's shoes. How would you have handled the aftermath of the trauma Caroline faced when she was first taken by The Cur? Would you have done anything differently?
5. How does Caroline's art represent what she's feeling? What do you think her art might have looked like had she not been abducted as a child?
6. *Such a Pretty Smile* is more than just a horror novel—it is about how women are gaslighted, abused, victimized, and shamed by the patriarchy as a way to keep anyone who isn't male, white, cisgender, and heterosexual under their control. How do the various psychiatrists—especially Caroline's—prop up these societal methods of control? How does Daniel? Are there any other characters who were surprising villains to you? Were there any surprising allies?
7. Lila, Caroline, and Beth each struggle against being silenced, and against being targeted by The Cur. What are their differences in the ways they handle these struggles? What are the similarities?

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8. At any point, were you able to predict who was behind The Cur's attacks, or what The Cur represented?
9. Do you feel that Lila and Caroline were able to reclaim some power in their final scenes together?
10. How did the end of the novel make you feel? Angry? Hopeful? Fearful? Inspired? How does the end of the book also feeling like a beginning? Does this affect your interpretation and feelings about the events that occurred?

