

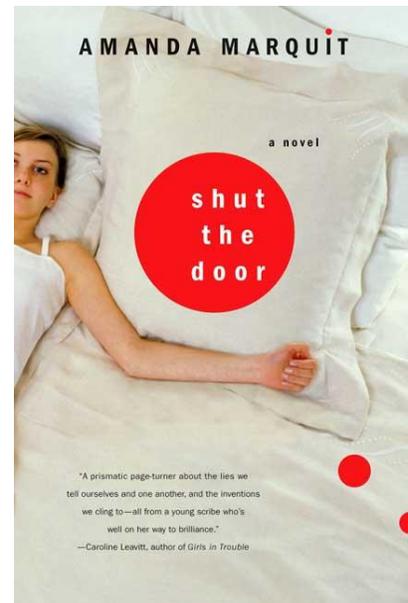
READING GROUP GUIDE

Shut the Door

By Amanda Marquit

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About this Guide

The following author biography and list of questions about *Shut the Door* are intended as resources to aid individual readers and book groups who would like to learn more about the author and this book. We hope that this guide will provide you a starting place for discussion, and suggest a variety of perspectives from which you might approach *Shut the Door*.

About the Book

In the vein of "American Beauty," *Shut the Door* offers a glimpse into the world of a family in crisis. It focuses on two teenage sisters struggling to carve their identities as young adults, taking risks and undergoing disturbing transformations that go unchallenged by their emotionally absent parents. Meanwhile, their parents' marriage is disintegrating and no longer provides the support the girls so desperately need. Their father's prolonged absence on a business trip provides the impetus to reevaluate family roles and relationships--and the choices made are shocking. This evocative family portrait reveals just what happens when our support system falls away and we become disconnected from the ones we love the most.

About the Author

Amanda Marquit, nineteen years old, graduated from New York City's Professional Children's School and enrolled at Brown University in the fall of 2005. Amanda began work on *Shut the Door*, her first novel, at age fourteen and completed it at age sixteen.



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Discussion Questions

1. Lilliana and Vivian grew up with only a wall separating them, but they turn out very differently, each with her own issues. Who do you identify with more, and if she were your friend, how would you have suggested she deal with her problems?
2. Early in the book, Harry says “he liked being known as part of a working thing: a family, a machine.” Does the word “machine” describe your family? If so, what role in the machine does each of your family members play? If not, think of another word that describes your family and talk about why this fits.
3. What do you think of Bea? Do you feel sorry for her? Annoyed by her? Bea asks herself “What was Bea without Harry?”...what do think is the answer to this?
4. Sex plays an important role in both girls lives but for opposite reasons: Vivian because she is a virgin and Lilliana because she sleeps with almost everyone. What about their personalities drives them to make these choices? What do you think of the way that their friends talk and gossip about sex: cruel or normal?
5. It took twenty years for Harry to officially recognize his unhappiness in his marriage. What do you think the early years of Harry and Beatrice’s marriage were like? Why do you think Harry didn’t leave Beatrice earlier? Once he finally did leave, what do you think the woman in red blouse and black skirt represents to him?
6. Is Lilliana in love with Paul? If yes, how should she have dealt with the situation? If you think it isn’t love, then what would you call it and why?
7. Why does Lilliana cut herself? Why does Vivian starve herself? What does this self-inflicted pain bring them in the end?
8. Would you say this is an accurate portrayal of a family in distress? Of teenage sisters? If you have a sibling (or know someone with a sibling), is he/she as different from you as Lilliana and Vivian, or are you more alike?
9. What do you think we would find out if there were another 50 pages in this book? How do you see Vivian and Lilliana resolving, or not resolving, everything? How about Bea and Harry?

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