



FLATIRON
BOOKS
NEW YORK

Somebody's Daughter Reading Group Guide

Welcome to the Reading Group Guide for *Somebody's Daughter*. Please note: In order to provide reading groups with the most informed and thought-provoking questions possible, it is necessary to reveal important aspects of this memoir, as well as the ending. If you have not finished reading *Somebody's Daughter*, we respectfully suggest that you consider waiting before reviewing this guide.

1. Ashley discusses what it was like visiting her father in prison, and how the weight of their expectations held them back from spoiling the other's dream (page 17). In what ways have unrealistic expectations set upon yourself and others held you back from connecting wholeheartedly?
2. As a child Ashley believed that "the badness belonged where it landed" (page 29) and her mother hurting her was somehow in her control. Where do you think this mentality comes from? Do you think this mentality follows a person well into their adult life? If so, can you describe how it affects them as an adult?
3. As they watch the snakes burn, Ashley's grandmother says that "we don't give up on our people. We don't stop loving them . . . not even when we're burning alive" (page 74). Can you think of a time when you've found this statement to be true? How can this statement be harmful to one's well-being?
4. Reflecting on how and when she fell in love with reading, Ashley writes, "For the rest of my life, I would seek out the library the way some search for the soft light of a chapel in the dark" (page 80). Discuss a moment in your life where you realized what reading meant to you. In what ways did it provide a much-needed light in your life?
5. When Ashley begins to grow into a teenager she starts to experience being treated like an object under the male gaze (page 150). In what ways did this transition

- affect Ashley? How has society normalized the male gaze, and how has it affected you?
6. Abandoning the bond she held with her teacher, Mr. Martin, Ashley says that any kindness that existed between them was bound to be tainted by how she looked (page 168). How does society widely contribute to the sexualization of young Black girls' bodies, and how does this affect how they view themselves?
 7. When Ashley gets accepted to her dream university she comes to the realization that she doesn't need to belong to anyone to get anywhere in life (page 213). After years of yearning to feel in control of herself and her life, she's finally reached that point. Discuss a time when you realized you're in control of who you want to become.
 8. When Ashley heads home to visit her family, she makes sure to repeat a reassuring mantra as she looks at herself in the mirror (page 218). What habits or activities do you partake in that helps keep you grounded?
 9. Making the transition from attending a predominately Black high school to a predominately white institution, Ashley reflects on the many disparities between herself and her white peers. How can these disparities affect Black students? How can PWIs improve their culture and better support their Black students?
 10. When Ashley begins to feel distant from Brett she asks him why he feels so far from her, and to that he replies with, "Why do you need something to be wrong?" (page 225). Why do you think Ashley feels a need to self-sabotage? How does someone move away from the lingering feeling that something is wrong?
 11. When Brett breaks up with Ashley her world comes crashing around her when she realizes he's been her only source of "unconditional love" (pages 229–231). Why is placing such an extreme responsibility such as this upon someone dangerous?
 12. In a moment of vulnerability both Ashley and her mother cry together, realizing they should be closer (page 314). In what ways can one become free and in control of their life when they submit to their vulnerabilities?
 13. Ashley says that "when you're the first to move away from a close-knit family, it can feel like you've abandoned a part of yourself" (page 318). Can you recall a time that for you felt like, what Ashley describes as, "a point where your life is

split into befores and afters”?

14. *Somebody's Daughter* ends with Ashley opening a door to building a relationship with her father. She writes, “There was a new road to pave together, and I wanted to do the work beside him just as I am” (page 318). Reflect on a time where you’ve opened the door to a relationship you thought was lost.
15. The ending of *Somebody's Daughter* show the importance of the strength of vulnerability. In what ways can you find strength in your vulnerabilities?