

# Readers' Guide

1. As we meet her in Cairo, Leah is considerably more jaded than the idealistic young woman who embarked on a career in humanitarian aid fifteen years before. In what ways do you see the world differently than you did a decade or so ago? Do you agree with the statement that both dreamers and cynics have a role to play in trying to make it a better place?
2. Prior to Matty's disappearance, Leah finds herself seriously contemplating the end of her marriage for the first time, and wondering whether she can ever be enough for Matty. Have you ever experienced this kind of head-vs-heart struggle, perhaps in a romantic or family relationship, or in a job or career?
3. As a biracial woman, Leah sometimes feels caught between two worlds, and only partially welcome in either. Has there ever been a time when you've felt you don't fit or feared being seen as an imposter or somehow fake? Did you eventually find your place or are you still looking?
4. Though her world is steeped in the pervasive nature of violence against women, Leah avoids dealing with her own rape. While there is no right or wrong way to deal with assault, this leads to some questionable choices, both for herself and Matty. Does Leah's decision to hook up with a near stranger seem out of character or can it be seen as an ill-fated coping strategy? Do you think Matty's desire to gain justice for Leah is colored by the violence his mother experienced, with the corresponding effect it had on his childhood? As the #MeToo movement has gained strength, why do you think Leah still chose to say silent?
5. In Africa, Leah chafes against the strongly patriarchal culture. Does her question about why women should be expected to wait for liberation seem fair or was it naïve, given the realities of where she was? What do you think you might have done if you'd been there with her?
6. How did the experience of losing his faith change Matty? As an adult, are there people or institutions you've stopped believing in over the years? How did it change your perspective?
7. Aid work and conflict journalism are both professions which often exact a heavy toll on those involved. Given the hard living conditions, safety risks, and low pay, what do you think keeps them coming back?
8. Suppose you were in a position to photograph a terrible, but newsworthy act. How would you decide whether to take the photo?
9. If you were a journalist, under what conditions would you agree to cooperate with a government investigation? What if cooperating might compromise a source living in a country under an authoritarian regime?