

READER'S GUIDE

Of the four stories in this collection, which one did you connect with the most? What about this story did you enjoy?

“In This Business” is the first story, but is also the dedication for the collection. What aspects of Karla’s journey were you able to relate to?

Believe it or not, “The Joker” was written long before the 2016 election, even though the collection was published close to election day. Does the story seem more or less realistic now that we know how the results of that election?

Both Milton and Randolph are idealists, is there still a place for an earnest journalist in our stories today?

After finishing the story “Dolly” did you feel that every character had a clean resolution? If not, what did you want to see for them?

In “Dolly” all of the characters are trapped in an “unwinnable game.” Which character did you want to root for the most? Why did you connect with that character?

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“Escaping Avila Chase” starts with two simple lines. “It was cold. Or rather, it was cool.” From the outset, Trevor is revising how he is telling his story to appeal to the reader. How does he continue to do this throughout the story?

The topics presented in “Escaping Avila Chase” present murky questions about domestic violence. What were your thoughts on the outcome? Did Trevor deserve a resolution? Did he deserve forgiveness? If not, what would be required for him to be absolved?

We only interact with Avila, the real Avila, very briefly in the story. How did she differ from the image of her that Trevor presented throughout the story?

In contemporary culture, men can relive their relationships through their work and it is called art. When a woman does this she is criticized and shamed for it. How does Avila’s choice to omit Trevor from her works play a critical role in this story? What do you think her intentions were?