

BOOK CLUB in a bag

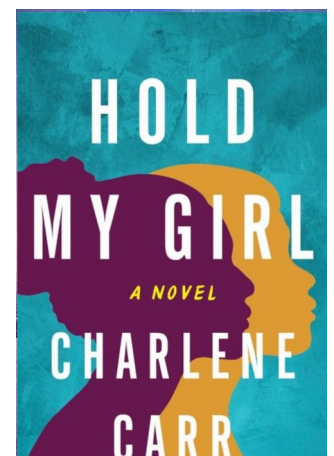


Hold My Girl

Charlene Carr

Discussion Questions

1. Although the switch at the clinic would have greatly affected Patrick—just as the years of infertility did—we see very little consideration throughout the novel of how he’s handling everything. Do you feel Katherine was selfish in carrying this as her burden and tragedy rather than truly seeing it as Patrick’s too?
2. Patrick’s infidelity was a huge shock to Katherine; that Tess was the person he was unfaithful with, an even greater one. What role, if any, do you feel Katherine played in Patrick’s betrayal? Is there room for forgiveness and moving on together, or was the betrayal too deep? The book’s ending doesn’t indicate whether Katherine and Patrick will try to “make it work.” Do you think they should? Why or why not?
3. As a result of the story’s setting (and Katherine’s socio-economic status), the fact that Katherine is a Black woman who gave birth to a white child who is not biologically hers played a fairly minor role in the novel. This would not have been the case in many other parts of the world. How do you feel the same story would have played out where you live, and why?
4. Tess has had incredible pain and trauma in her life, which has led to poor decisions and a reliance on alcohol to dull her pain. Do you feel confident she’s had the breakthrough she needs to become the type of mother who can keep Rose loved and safe, or do you hope that (in the imagined future) Katherine is extremely cautious about the boundaries she places around allowing Tess into Rose’s life?
5. Both Tess and Katherine experienced feelings of brokenness during their years of infertility and felt like they were disappointing not only themselves, but also the people in their lives. How common do you think it is for women to feel like this, and what can (or should) society do to support women through this very unique pain? What do you think—for the most part—society gets wrong in this area?
6. Tess hypothesizes that if she’d just been honest about being raped, so much of her life might have turned out differently. Despite the #MeToo movement, and the conversation about sexual assault transforming over the past few years, do you think that many women still keep silent about sexual harassment and assault? Why? And what do you believe needs to change for more women to speak up?
7. At its core, *Hold My Girl* is a novel about motherhood. What, to you, makes a mother? And what should determine whether a person is entitled to raise a child, be it their biological offspring or not?
8. The book ends with Katherine inviting Tess to spend some time with her and Rose, but she offers no promises about how much time or whether a visit will happen again. What do you think of this ending? Do you hope Katherine lets Tess have a regular role in Rose’s life—maybe even shared custody?



BOOK CLUB in a bag



About the Author

Charlene Carr studied literature at university, attaining both a BA and MA in English, including a study program at Oxford. She attained a degree in Journalism and, after travelling the globe for several years and working an array of mostly writing related jobs, she decided the time had come to focus exclusively on her true love – novel writing.

She has independently published nine novels and her first agented novel, *Hold My Girl*, has sold to HarperCollins Canada, Welbeck Publishing (UK), Sourcebooks Landmark (US), and Alma Littera (Lithuania) and is set for adaptation to TV by Blink49 Studios in partnership with Groundswell Productions. She has received grants from Arts Nova Scotia and Canada Council for the Arts to write and revise her next novel.

This book may be available for download as an eBook.

For more information, please visit lpl.overdrive.com or call 519-661-4600.

Need titles for your next book club? Visit lpl.ca/bookclubinabag

Sources:

<https://writersunion.ca/member/Charlene-Carr>

