

Reading Group Guide

1. *Other People's Fun* opens with this passage:

I look. I can't stop looking. That's the deal, isn't it? We all know that's how it works. If someone wants to be seen – and oh, how they want to be seen – then someone has to watch. The pageant needs its audience, and that's where I come in. Rapt, attentive, free to draw my own conclusions. I wonder if they ever think about that. I wonder if they understand they are nothing without me.

Why might Harriet have started her novel here? How did this passage inform your reading?

2. What do you think draws Sookie to Ruth, both at the reunion and after? What motives might each of them bring to the beginning of their friendship?

3. What is the significance of Ruth stealing Sookie's sunglasses?

4. Ruth initially describes her re-meeting of Sookie as “a reminder that some things do get easier with age.” Reflecting on the relationship that unfolds between the two women, would you say things got easier with age? What role does aging, generally, play in the novel?

5. What does Waxham represent for Ruth? How does his return make Ruth see her adult self differently? Do you see her differently after watching her with Waxham?

6. Ruth portrays Sookie as a selfish and thoughtless friend; why, then, does she remain friends with her? Do you think Ruth is a better friend to Sookie than Sookie is to her?
7. Ruth's closest relationship could be said to be with social media. How does thinking of herself as a voyeur inform Ruth's decisions? Do you view her voyeurism in real life differently than that online? Do you think there are fair and unfair ways to use social media?
8. What roles do marriage and motherhood play in Ruth's life? What role do they play in the novel overall?
9. Ruth and Sookie have many conversations about Waxham, though he remains unnamed for many of them. What impact does Ruth have on Sookie and Waxham's relationship?
10. The novel ends before we see the fallout from Ruth's phone call with Francis. What is the effect of this ambiguous ending?
11. Were you surprised by Ruth's choices in the end? Why or why not?

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