

Brad Graber

Author • Humorist • Blogger • Speaker

Reading Group Guide for *After the Fall*

Introduction

Rikki has a secret. She can't remember her mother who died a few years earlier. Being raised by her grandmother in Queens, every time she asks Rita a question, the older woman refuses to discuss the matter. Desperate to learn the truth, Rikki finds a hidden album with family photographs. Who is the boy in the picture with her mother? Determined to unlock the mystery, she embarks on a journey from New York City to Toledo, then on to Detroit and Phoenix to meet Harry, a writer who is struggling with his own issues of identity.

About the Author

Brad Graber writes novels because he grew up in a family where no one ever listened to him—so he made up stories about them. Born and raised in New York City, Brad obtained a B.A. in Biology from the State University of New York at Buffalo and an M.H.A. from Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. A former healthcare executive, Brad has held a number of management positions and been a Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives and a Certified Medical Executive through Medical Group Management Association. Though he no longer works in healthcare, he continues to volunteer with local non-profits. *After the Fall* is Brad's second novel. His debut novel, *The Intersect*, released in 2016, has won multiple awards and garnered rave reviews. Brad currently lives in Phoenix with his husband Jeff and their dog Charlie. He writes a weekly blog: *There, I Said It!*

1. Why do you think the author named the novel, *After the Fall*? Is there more than one meaning for the title?
2. The novel is set in the year 2005. What were the clues offered that confirmed the novel's time and place?
3. Rikki and Rita have a challenging relationship. How would you describe that relationship? Is the tension due to an age gap? Or is there more going on? Did you believe that Rita loved her granddaughter? Were you able to parse her words from her actions?
4. Three other characters are introduced in the novel. Barbra, Rikki's friend, Barney, her romantic interest, and Mr. Rosenfeld, her English teacher. How did each character impact Rikki? What did each character have in common? Did either of those characters remind you of your teenage years?
5. The author references Theodore Dreiser's *An American Tragedy* in the novel. Why do you think he picked that particular novel?
6. When we first meet Harry, he's walking Beetle and runs into Lil. How would you describe Harry's personality? There seems to be a push/pull going on between these two characters. Did it make you curious as to where the relationship might be heading?

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7. Rikki goes on a journey from NYC to Michigan, and then on to Phoenix. At what point in the book did you make the connection between the two stories? Were there any clues that triggered the connection for you?
8. Sammy and Evelyn appear at the midway point of the novel. What was similar about those two characters? How did they fit into the author's message?
9. There are two characters in the novel that are no longer alive. Did you find yourself captured by their stories? Were you surprised about their fates?
10. The author refers to bisexuality as being "about the person" rather than about the "sex." What did you think of that explanation?
11. At the end of the novel, Rita reveals her true intent. Was there anything in this character's back story which made that reveal resonate for you?
12. Were you surprised by the end of the novel?
13. Of all the characters, which was your favorite? Why?
14. If *After the Fall* were to be cast as a movie, which actors would you envision to play the various roles?