

## Little Bee by Chris Cleave

Next meeting will be Tuesday, October 11 at 6:30 p.m.

**Spoiler alert:** *you may not want to read these questions until after you've finished reading the book.*

1. Little Bee tells the reader, "We must see all scars as beauty. Okay? This will be our secret. Because take it from me, a scar does not form on the dying. A scar means, I survived" (p. 9). Which characters in the story are left with physical scars? Emotional scars? Do they embrace them as beautiful? Did you feel more connected to Little Bee as a narrator after this pact?
2. Did you learn anything new about the way refugees are treated in Britain? What do you think about it? What do you know about how the U.S. handles refugees?
3. Suicide comes up several times in the novel. Do you think there is a difference in the refugee's suicide in the barn and Andrew's?
4. Why do you think it is a comfort to Little Bee to imagine how she would kill herself in each new place she goes? Why don't you think she killed herself in the end?
5. Little Bee strives to learn the Queen's English in order to survive in the detention center. How does her grasp of the language compare with Charlie's? How does the way each of these two characters handle the English language help to characterize them?
6. "To have an affair, I began to realize, was a relatively minor transgression. But to really escape from Andrew, to really become myself, I had to go the whole way and fall in love" (p. 161-162). Do you agree with Sarah that an affair is a minor transgression? How did falling in love with someone else help Sarah become herself? What role, if any, did Andrew play in perpetuating Sarah's extramarital affair?
7. Why do you think Andrew refused to cut off his finger but Sarah was able to? Do you think you would have?
8. Do you think Little Bee is as culpable in Andrew's death as he was in her sister's?
9. Does Sarah's discovery of Andrew's research and possible book redeem him in your eyes? Who did you like better, Andrew or Lawrence?
10. Did you learn anything new about the oil wars in Nigeria? What do you see as implications for us and other "first world" countries?
11. Why do you think Little Bee feels hope at the end of the novel despite her dire circumstances?