



Beverly Diehl

Sex, Drugs, Rock ‘N Roll, and a Tiara

Book Club Discussion Questions

1. A *bête noir* (literally, black beast) is something particularly avoided, detested, or feared. The author’s *bête noir* was receiving the diagnosis that killed her mother, breast cancer. In the classic novel *1984*, Winston’s *bête noir* was rats. Do you have a *bête noir*, and if so, how are you taming the beast?

SEX.

2. The “sex” part of the title refers primarily to polyamorous relationships. Were you familiar with this form of relationship? What are the benefits and pitfalls of such relationships?
3. Popular wisdom suggests that the best way to survive a life-threatening illness or injury is with a stalwart primary partner, a single lifeline. But not everyone is equipped to play Tarzan, and sometimes “support personnel” drop out, change or fail. What are the pros and cons of depending on a single lifeline, versus a support web?
4. Many people assume they have no STIs (Sexually Transmitted Infections) if they have only been with “nice” partners. That’s kind of like assuming that nice people can’t give you a cold or the flu. Did you learn any information about common STIs, contrary to what you thought you knew? How would you cope with the stigma of carrying an incurable, if minor, STI?
5. Sexuality was very important to this author, but everyone prioritizes different facets of their life. What would *you* fight to hold onto, and why?

DRUGS.

6. Medical professionals often minimize the side effects of treatment, because not every patient experiences them all, and also because they don’t want to scare people off about an unpleasant short-term treatment like radiation that improves their prognosis. How do you feel about this approach? If your prognosis had a much poorer outcome than Cancer Lite, would you opt out of treatment altogether?
7. The author experiences various side effects from the Tamoxifen and anesthesia. She also experiments with medicinal marijuana for pain and anxiety. Have you ever experimented with marijuana for medicinal purposes?

ROCK ‘N ROLL.

8. Have you used playlists or music to get through challenges? What do you think of the author’s idea of soliciting song suggestions from friends and family?



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9. What is your “theme song” to carry you through tough times?
10. The author’s body image issues were helped tremendously by her boudoir photo shoots. Did that surprise you as an approach for feeling happier about one’s body? Have you had one, or would you try it yourself?

And a TIARA

11. The author wears a tiara to put a more positive spin on her medical visits and procedures. How effective do you think that was? What is *your* tiara equivalent?
12. Life doesn’t stop or slow down when individuals are in crisis, much as we might like it to. What did you think about Barry’s death and Alpha’s ghosting?
13. Were there any universal take-aways about life, death, and grief?
14. Has this book changed how you will deal with future health or life challenges? In what ways?