

S O C I A L F I C T I O N S S E R I E S

the Daddies

kimberly dark

BRILL | SENSE

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DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. How does the word “Daddy” carry different meaning than the word “Father?” How are the two words used in public conversations, in intimate discussions and by whom?
2. Given that “Daddy” is a word that usually refers to men, how does the text de-center maleness from our understanding of “Daddy?” What does it mean to de-center maleness in this way?
3. How is “Who’s your daddy?” both a statement of power and a joke, at the same time? (What does joking conceal or reveal about social norms and values in this instance?)
4. How have you heard the phrase “Who’s your Daddy?” used in personal and community interactions, in sports, politics or advertising? What has changed about your understanding or use of this phrase in reading *The Daddies*?
5. The italicized sections of the book represent the voice of the “mythic girl.” She is both the same as the narrator and also more than the narrator. How does this literary treatment enhance the story’s ability to transcend personal storytelling?
6. The first section of the book includes childhood snapshots – moments when the importance of gendered hierarchy are being instilled in the main character. Can you remember moments from your own childhood that instilled the importance of gendered hierarchy?
7. There are two different chapters entitled “The First Time.” Other than one being an account of incest and the other being a consensual sexual relationship between adults – how do the two scenes differ?
8. How are purity and ownership rituals, inherent in traditional marriage, romanticized? Why does this persist in modern culture, given their clear misogynist underpinnings?
9. How do voters look for and laud masculine traits, even in female political candidates?

DISCUSSION GUIDE

10. How do interpersonal relationship rituals between men and women support incest culture? I.e., how is childlike appearance and behavior in women romanticized in mainstream culture and in interpersonal dialogue?
11. Is gender difference necessary for attraction?
12. How are women complicit in patriarchy and misogyny? (This complex question should be answerable in numerous ways, based on the text.)
13. The final chapters of the book imply that power relationships might be possible without oppression and without the necessity of gendered dynamics. Do you agree? Why and why not?
14. Do you find the final chapters of the book hopeful? Why and why not? How might it be possible in your own life to create and nurture non-violent forms of masculinity?
15. How and why are actual stories (and analyses) of sex and sexual interactions kept out of public and scholarly discourse? Who/what is protected when sex is not discussed from a variety of perspectives?
16. How might it look to eradicate misogyny from your own thinking, choices, language and life? How might that influence the culture we collectively create if more people were to do this?