

***YOU
CAN'T
CATCH
ME***

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A READING GROUP GUIDE




TOPICS & QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. When the novel opens, we learn that Jessica Williams has recently been fired for plagiarism but managed to finagle a good settlement on her way out the door by essentially blackmailing her employer. What were your initial thoughts about her character? Did you feel bad when she returned from Mexico and found out that all her settlement money was gone, or did you think that she somehow deserved it?
2. As we get to know Jessica, we realize certain things—for instance, how she was raised in a cult without a typical family structure. Did this make you change your perception of her character? Does it excuse some of the things she did later on?

3. Jessica has tried to move on from her upbringing and lead a “normal” life, but it seems as though her only real friendships are with The Twists, people who have also experienced a similar upbringing. She often repeats the “Toddisms” that were hammered into her as a child. How difficult do you think it would be for someone to be “deprogrammed” after a childhood like that? What would be their challenges integrating into society afterward?
4. Jessica is determined to find the person who scammed her and get her money back. Do you think that determination and resilience is somehow a product of growing up in the LOT? Do you see any similarities between her and Todd?
5. Liam seems wary of Jessica’s plans but is nonetheless keen to go along with her, and he acts like a pseudo father figure to her. Do you think he has been harboring feelings for her for some time, or is he merely taking advantage of a new opportunity? Did you believe Jessie when she said that he was with other women he’s helped out? Jessica seems jealous whenever Liam interacts with another woman—do you think that’s why she didn’t introduce him to Kiki?
6. When looking for Jessica Two’s other victims, Jessica finds “Jessie” (who we later learn is the scammer). Jessie is effectively “hiding in plain sight” and succeeding in her criminal activities. Why do you think she agrees to go along with Jessica and put that all at risk?

7. When Jessica and Jessie are in Philadelphia looking for JJ, they participate in a few scams themselves, beating the three-card-monte man at his own game and running a Bar Bill con on an easy mark. Did this raise any red flags for you or make you suspect that there was more to know about Jessie and/or Jessica?
8. What are your thoughts on Jessica and Kiki's relationship? When Jessica left the LOT, she tried to get Kiki to go with her, but did she try hard enough? When Kiki does finally leave five years later, she's far more vulnerable than Jessica was. Is Jessica at fault for not getting "real" help for Kiki and for her suicide? Can you understand Jessica's desire for revenge?
9. Jessica's mother, Therese/Charlotte, was complacent during the hardships Jessica endured growing up but reveals that she was instrumental in Jessica's escape from the LOT when she realized what Todd's intentions were. Do you believe her? Do you think she's fit to raise Kiki's daughter, Serene? Many of the former cult members are still living together—do you think they're carrying on Todd's vision or that they simply don't know what to do with themselves?
10. It took Jessica many years of planning to find Jessica Two and enact her grand plan. Do you think there is something pathological in that? Even with all that planning, things still didn't work out perfectly. Do you think Jessica intended to kill Jessica Two from the start?

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11. When Jessica Two's body is found, Jessica realizes that she needs to disappear and writes a goodbye letter to Liam. Were you disappointed that the body turned up? Do you think Jessica should face the consequences of her actions? Do you think she will get away with everything?