



FLATIRON
BOOKS
NEW YORK

If I Was Your Girl

Reading Group Guide

1. When Grant first introduces himself to Amanda, she wonders “if a boy like him could ever understand what it was like to be me. To know what it was like to view high school as something you needed to survive.” Do you think every high schooler feels that way at some point? Does the book ultimately agree with Amanda or not?
2. There are many ways to describe Amanda—she’s young, Southern, transgender. Despite these specific facts, in what ways is her story universal?
3. When young Amanda gives her dad the story she wrote in class, he tells her, “Son, I want you to have a good life. Boys who really think the things in your story are confused. They don’t have good lives. So you’re not one of those boys.” It becomes clear that Amanda’s father was always worried about her safety, even as he tried to hide who she really was. Was he always wrong to do so? Do you think his actions are justified in some way?
4. Amanda wrestles with religion and her faith, thinking, “It was hard to place too much hope in a God so many people said hated me,” and yet she also feels connected and reassured in church. For queer readers who are religious, how do you grapple with traditional religious texts and beliefs?
5. When Amanda goes to the football game, she observes that “too many dads seemed interested in us as we passed, and for just a moment I missed the near-invisibility of life as a boy.” In what ways is she still learning what it means to be a woman, even though she’s been one on the inside her whole life?
6. Amanda feels that her dad was always trying to push “boy” activities such as hunting and sports, on her. Why are activities still gendered? Is it harder for young boys to get away from those expectations than it is for young girls?
7. When Bee takes photos of Amanda, she says, “Why a pretty girl like you doesn’t want to be seen is a mystery to me.” How does the book show the way outward appearances reflect our true selves? Or how they don’t?

8. When Amanda's mother says she misses her son, she tells Amanda, "You look different, you sound different, your hands feel different when I touch 'em. Hell, you even *smell* different" even as Amanda points out that she's still the same person. What is it that makes us who we are?
9. Did you anticipate Bee's big homecoming reveal? Was it building over the course of the book as different characters both withheld and revealed their own secrets or was it a surprise? Do you agree with Amanda when she concludes that "maybe secrets and lies were a part of life, maybe everyone had something they were lying to themselves about, or something they were hiding"?
10. When Amanda plays catch with her father, she tells him, "I'm not brave. Bravery implies I had a choice. I'm just me, you know?" Discuss the ways Amanda is brave or if you agree with her that she isn't.
11. When Amanda returns to Lambertville, Anna tells her she "thinks it's a sin," but "just 'cause I'm grappling with the metaphysics doesn't mean I don't still love you." Is it possible to be friends with someone who has views that completely contradict your own?
12. Grant tells Amanda, "Just because you have a past doesn't mean you can't have a future." How does Amanda leave her past behind? How does her past shape her into the character we come to know?
13. *If I Was Your Girl* explores a point of view and personal history that many readers might not have encountered before. Do you think that reading fiction, by putting us into the shoes of our protagonist, makes us more empathetic people?