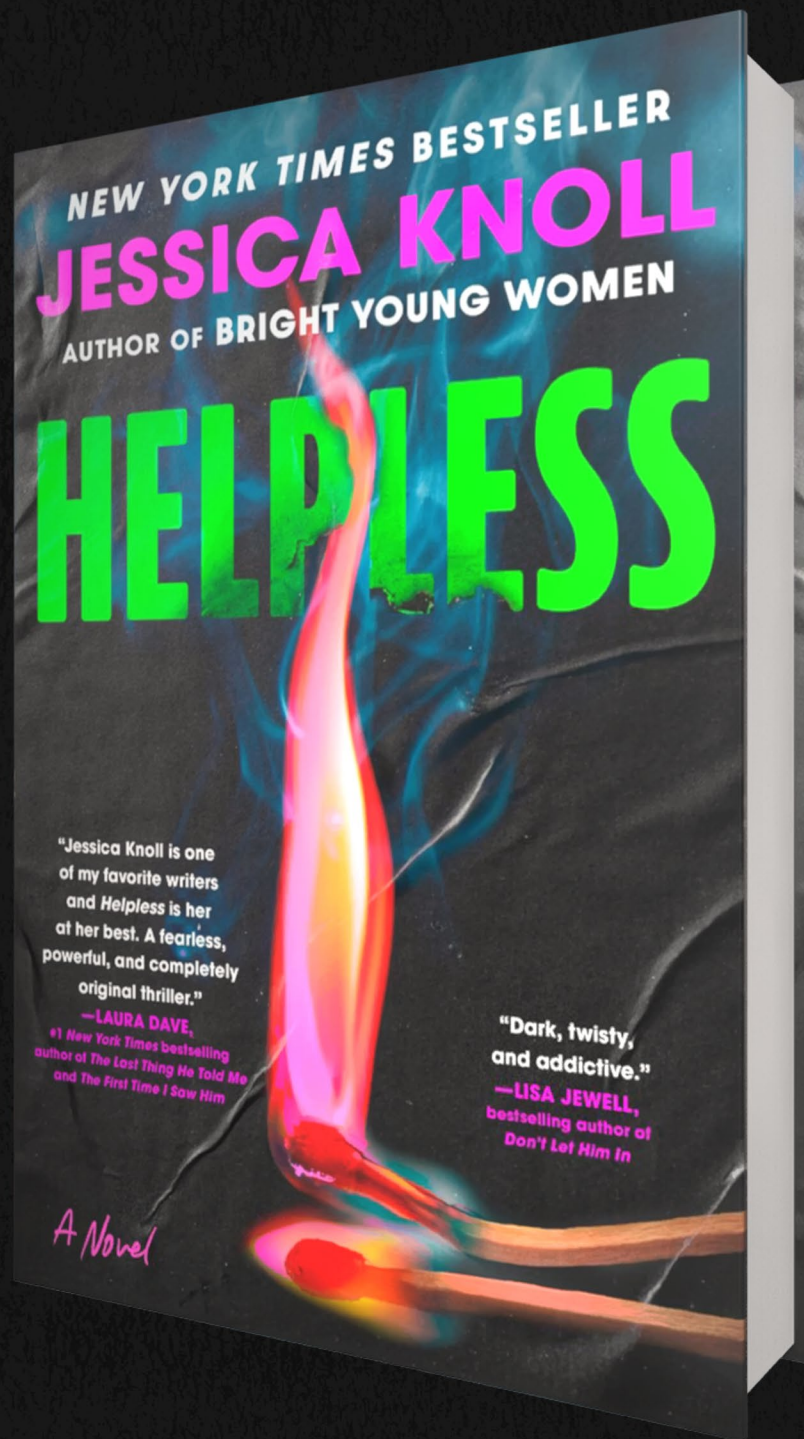
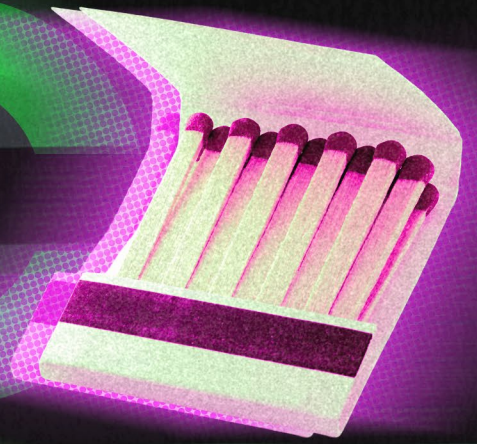




READING GROUP GUIDE

This reading group guide for *Helpless* includes an introduction, discussion questions, and ideas for enhancing your book club. The suggested questions are intended to help your reading group find new and interesting angles and topics for your discussion. We hope that these ideas will enrich your conversation and increase your enjoyment of the book.

INTRO DUCE TION



IT'S BEEN TWELVE YEARS SINCE FAYE HERON BROKE HENRY SPALDING'S HEART.

Henry was her college boyfriend, her first love, but Faye was in danger of being subsumed by him and the intensity of their connection. Now, Faye is one half of a Hollywood power producing duo. Henry is a married father running the family business. On the surface, both of their lives have essentially gone to plan.

When a former beloved college professor suddenly passes away, Faye and Henry find themselves back on campus for the funeral, circling something old and dangerous. But when Henry drugs and kidnaps Faye, all bets are off. As Henry's wanton demands intensify, Faye finds herself pulled back into his irresistible gravity. Faye and Henry spiral into their old dynamic and a sprawling, years-old mystery begins to take shape—one that will rewrite history as Faye remembers it and reveal an astounding, cataclysmic truth.

Topics and Questions for Discussion

1. How has Faye and Henry's relationship evolved over time? How is their relationship now different from how it was in college?

2. Despite their time apart, Henry and Faye quickly fall back into their old dynamics, even though they are married to other people. What do their relationships with their current spouses tell us about their characters?

3. When PT picks up Faye to take her to the airport after Henry breaks down, he tells her "Don't be afraid to write about this one day" (page 144). How did his mentorship shape her career? In what ways did it impact her relationship with Henry?

4. Faye is extremely successful and driven in her career. How does her success impact her relationships? How does it shape her interactions with Emma?

5. On page 129, Faye stabs Campbell in order to escape. How does this impact your perception of her character?

6. Do Henry and Faye's power dynamics ever flip? Where do you see this happen?

7. There are a lot of twists and turns in this story. Which was the most surprising, and why?

8. We learn that Henry struggles with anxiety and panic attacks. How does this affect your view of him? Does it excuse or explain any of his behavior? Why or why not?

9. What was your understanding of the ending? Did Faye's experiences in the book happen as written, or were they all part of her script?

Enhance Your Book Club

1. Write out one of your own fantasies as a screenplay and read it back. What felt rewarding about it? Why were you drawn to what you wrote about?

2. Plan a trip to the Finger Lakes region of New York. Virtually explore the scenery and activities in the area.

3. Explore Jessica Knoll's earlier works, such as *Luckiest Girl Alice* and *Bright Young Women*. Can you pinpoint any common themes in her books?