

PRIVACY

NINA SADOWSKY

A photograph of a modern, dark-colored house at night. The house has large glass doors and windows that are brightly lit from within, creating a warm glow. A woman in a dark dress stands in the central doorway. To the left of the doorway, there is a small table with a lamp and some decorative items. To the right, there are potted plants. In the foreground, there is a swimming pool with a blue tiled bottom, reflecting the light from the house. The sky is dark blue, and some trees are visible in the background.

BOOK CLUB KIT

LETTER FROM THE AUTHOR

HELLO, BOOK CLUB READERS!

Thank you for inviting me and *Privacy* into your group. I'm perpetually grateful and amazed that people read my books and talk about them, and I hope this book club kit inspires a fun event.

Privacy was conceived at the height of Southern California's Covid lockdown. I was asking myself: "How much can I take before I break?" and watching as others all around me reached their limits. The psychological stress of human isolation and a reliance on technological connection permeated every interaction. We are all dangerously exposed, I realized. We live in a constant cycle of sharing and gathering information, and all that data is a form of currency.

I examined the many ways in which our privacy is shattered: leaked sex tapes, cyberstalking, tracking devices, omnipresent CCTV, Big Tech's aggregation of our data, social media with its vicious and glorious power. I imagined a variety of characters at different points in their lives, and thought deeply about how trauma affects us, and therefore would affect them. I summoned empathy for all of my characters, particularly the most broken, and conjured scenarios designed to apply pressure to their wounds. I thought a lot about secrets, their value and their cost, and what it means to live in a society where overexposure is the norm. I also invoked the trade secrets of writing thrillers, the crucial objective of which is to hide all answers to all mysteries in plain sight, so that a reader feels shocked by the reveals, but also inevitably satisfied.

I hope the book entertained and your discussion is lively.

And don't forget to sign up here for my cheerfully dark dispatch, in which I share trade tips and tricks, decode Hollywood, and promote what's good in the world.

Yours from Los Angeles, land of sunny skies and shady people,
NINA SADOWSKY

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

PART 1

1. Discuss the Watching chapters. What did you think of the Watcher's perceptions and insights? What did you understand to be their goals?
2. Laina and Cal have very different life experiences and upbringings. How do you think those distinctions impact a) their chosen fields of work, and b) their relationship with one another as adults?
3. The novel questions whether Cal's pursuit of a story ever edges into invasive territory. What did you think of his eagerness to broadcast a live hostage situation? Would you watch that on your own local news?
4. As the story progresses, Cal's perception of Laina evolves. What are the turning points? What is the breaking point?
5. The novel questions how we can dictate our own privacy, ranging from concerns of online life to what we share in confidential settings. Did any examples from the story hit close to home? Did the novel make you rethink how you conduct matters of privacy in your own life?
6. What did you think of Laina's dramatic treatment philosophy? Do you think there were true therapeutic intentions behind her deceptions?

PART 2: "UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD YOU . . . ?"

1. Is there a circumstance under which you would use a petcam to keep watch on your pet? What if your pet were destroying your place while you were out? What if your pet was ill?
2. What circumstances would get you to turn a nannycam on your babysitter? If you're even thinking about it, is it just time to fire the nanny?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

PART 2: "UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD YOU . . . ?"

3. Would you read your partner's text messages if you suspected they were cheating? Or lying about money or something else significant?
4. Would you track your teenagers' phones without permission? Read their texts or emails?
5. Would you spy on your neighbor with binoculars if you thought it was "harmless?" If you only wanted to see their new kitchen remodel? If they were exhibitionists anyway?
6. Would you social-media-stalk an ex just to "see what they were up to?" To rub salt in your own wounds by reliving your past or follow the course of their new relationship with someone else?
7. Would you use filters to create a false social media image "just for fun?" Tocatfish someone romantically? To promote yourself professionally?
8. Would you put a tracking device on your partner's car? What if you thought they were in danger?
9. Would you ever secretly record a phone call or meeting? What if you needed leverage in a divorce or other volatile situation? What if you were being blackmailed?
10. Would you ever post a nude selfie? Under which circumstances?
11. Would you ever post someone else's nudes without permission? Could you find a way to justify that act?

RECIPES

COCKTAILS

THE PRIVACY PUNCH

3 oz. pineapple juice
2 oz. orange juice
1 oz. dark rum
1 oz. light rum
Splash of grenadine
Squeeze of lime

Serve over ice and garnish
with an orange slice.

THE NEWS OF THE DAY

1 oz. simple syrup
1 oz. gin,
1 oz. sloe gin
1 oz. fresh lemon juice
Fresh mint leaves
Crushed ice

Muddle mint, add gin, lemon
juice, and simple syrup; add
crushed ice; stir and add sloe
gin. Garnish with a lemon slice
dusted with sugar.

THE BETTER LIFE ELIXIR

1 oz. mezcal
2 oz. fresh ruby grapefruit juice
1 oz. simple syrup
2 oz. club soda
Squeeze of lime

Garnish with a lime slice
and serve with a hot chili
powder rim.

"THAT WAS A LOADED CONVERSATION" FRIES:

A riff on San Diego's famous "loaded" carne asada fries; meat and vegetarian versions.

32 oz. french fries
1 ½ lb. steak (or portobello mushrooms)
6 garlic cloves
2 tsp. salt
Black pepper to taste
¾ cup olive oil
2 tbsp. cumin
2 cups shredded jack cheese
1 cup guacamole
1 cup sour cream
1 bunch cilantro
1 lime (squeezed and zested)

1. Combine cilantro, garlic cumin, salt, pepper, olive oil, lime juice, and lime zest.
2. Marinate steak in the above mixture for four hours. (For a vegetarian version substitute portobello mushrooms and marinate for an hour.)
3. Grill steak and/or mushrooms.
4. Heat french fries as per package.
5. Slice steak and/or mushrooms into strips and layer on top of the fries in an oven safe pan.
6. Add shredded cheese and heat until melted.
7. Add dollops of sour cream and guacamole to taste.
8. Garnish with cilantro.

"AVOCADO TOAST AND OTHER SO-CAL CLICHES"

4 slices whole grain bread

2 ripe avocados

Sunflower seeds

Salt & pepper

Arugula

1 lemon (juiced and zested)

1. Toast bread.
2. Mash avocados with salt, pepper, lemon juice and lemon zest.
3. Spread avocado mash evenly on toast.
4. Sprinkle sunflower seeds and add a healthy handful of arugula.
5. Cut each slice of toast into quarters.

BALBOA BAR REMIX

a sundae bar style riff on the classic Balboa Bar, which is ice cream dipped in melted chocolate and then rolled in nuts or candy.

Two pints vanilla ice cream

Hot fudge sauce

Toffee bits

Crushed nuts

Flaked toasted coconut

Cocoa nibs

Crushed candy

1. Create a Sundae Bar! Assemble all ingredients and dig in!



PLAYLIST

THIS PLAYLIST IS AVAILABLE ON SPOTIFY AT [THIS LINK](#)

I'm Not the Only One
SAM SMITH

Teleport
GRABBITZ

Superstition
STEVIE WONDER

Ain't No Sunshine
BILL WITHERS

Call On Me
BOBBY "BLUE" BLAND

New Americana
HALSEY

Sign of the Times
HARRY STYLES

Come and Get Your Love
REDBONE

Survivin'
BASTILLE

Numb Little Bug
EM BEIHOLD

Love Again
DUA LIPA

Don't Know What It Means
TEDESCHI TRUCKS BAND

Stressed Out
TWENTY
ONE PILOTS

Right On
THE ROOTS, JOANNA
NEWSOM, STS

The Hype
TWENTY
ONE PILOTS

Love Potion No. 9
HERB ALPERT &
THE TIJUANA BRASS

Don't Let Me
Be Misunderstood
NINA SIMONE

Tell Me
Something Good
RUFUS, CHAKA KHAN

Can You Handle
My Love??
WALK THE MOON

Sound the Alarm (feat. Rivers
Cuomo of Weezer & Royal & the Serpent)
THE KNOCKS