



Lori Rader-Day **The Black Hour:** A Novel

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READERS' ADVISORY:

"This accomplished debut bears favorable comparison to the work of Gillian Flynn (more *Sharp Objects* than *Gone Girl*), Cornelia Read, and S. J. Watson." —*Booklist* (starred review)

ABOUT THE BOOK:

For Chicago sociology professor Amelia Emmet, violence was a research topic—until a student she'd never met shot her. He also shot himself. Now he's dead and she's back on campus, trying to keep up with her new normal and unable to stop wondering: Why? Amelia's new teaching assistant, Nathaniel Barber, is a grad student obsessed with Chicago's violent history. A serious scholar, and serious mess, he's hoping Amelia will approve his dissertation topic which it turns out, is the attack on her. Together and at cross-purposes, Amelia and Nathaniel stumble toward a truth that will explain the attack and take them both through the darkest hours of their lives.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. *The Black Hour* opens with Amelia Emmet's return to campus—where she thinks everyone is against her. That's only partly true, but she can't see it. Why do you think she has trouble accepting the support of her colleagues?
2. Amelia regrets many of her own decisions in life, thinking about "the Amelia Emmets I killed myself," with her choices. What decisions have been pivotal for where you are now in your life?
3. At a critical moment in Amelia and Nathaniel's friendship, at Amelia's apartment, the two make assumptions at odds with what is actually happening between them. How do both Amelia and Nathaniel enter this moment under delusions?
4. After reading *The Black Hour*, what kind of teacher do you think Amelia will be in the future? How has everything that's happened changed her?
5. The media documented Amelia's fall and then her rise from her blackest hour. What stories have you watched play out in the media? How do you think media attention affects victims?

For more discussion questions visit: SeventhStreetBooks.com/BlackHour.html