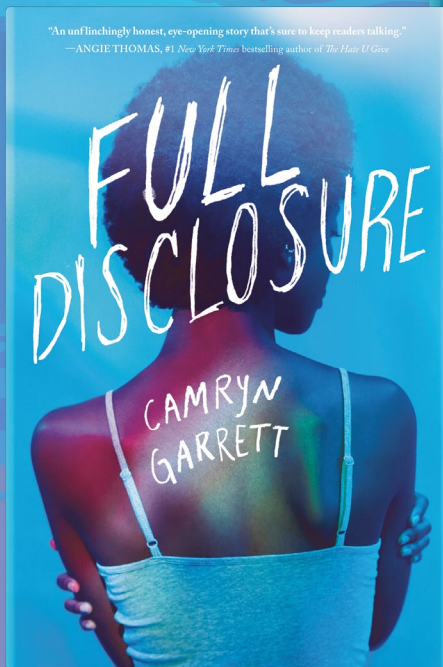


CAMRYN GARRETT

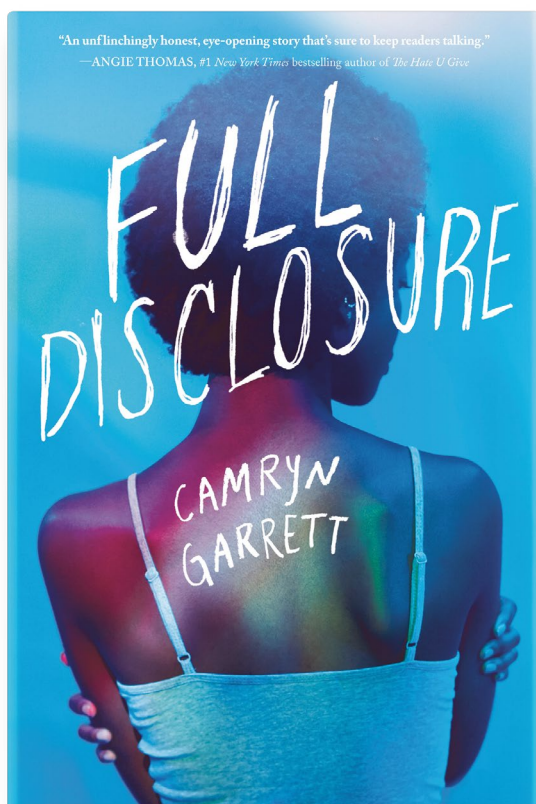
Discussion Guide



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HC: 978-1-984-82995-5 • TR: 978-1-984-82998-6
GLB: 978-1-984-82996-2 • EL: 978-1-984-82997-9



About the Book: The uplifting story of an HIV-positive teen, falling in love and learning to live her truth.

“A promising new voice in young adult literature, Camryn Garrett has penned an **unflinchingly honest, eye-opening, heartfelt story that’s sure to keep readers talking.**”

—Angie Thomas, #1 New York Times bestselling author of *The Hate U Give* and *On the Come Up*

“Successfully tackles discrimination through the lenses of race, sexuality, and having HIV, but also shows the possibility of living a full life despite it all. . . . **A story about telling your truth, your way.**”

—Kirkus Reviews

HC: 978-1-984-82999-3 • GLB: 978-1-984-83000-5
TR: 978-1-984-83002-9 • EL: 978-1-984-83001-2



About the Book: The behind-the-scenes access of *Almost Famous* meets the searing revelations of #MeToo in this story of a teen journalist who uncovers the scandal of the decade

★ “Fast-paced prose, wit, pitch-perfect dialogue, and memorable characters. **An irresistible, unapologetically feminist story.**”

—Kirkus Reviews, starred review

★ “Garrett’s sophomore novel is a **fantastic story** and remarkable testament to the #MeToo movement.”

—SLJ, starred review

HC: 978-0-593-43510-6
GLB: 978-0-593-43511-3 • EL: 978-0-593-43512-0



About the Book: It's too late for a Sweet Sixteen, but what if Mahalia had a coming-out party? *Friday I'm in Love* is a love letter to romantic comedies, Sweet Sixteen blowouts, Black joy, and queer pride.

“Camryn Garrett writes with wholehearted sincerity—sharp edged truth braided with irrepressible joy. Mahalia’s story lives, breathes and glows. *I’m in love with it every day of the week!*”

—Becky Albertalli, #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *Simon vs. the Homo sapiens Agenda*

★ “Both piercingly observant and joyful, this uplifting read stands out.”

—*Publishers Weekly*, starred review



About the Author

Camryn Garrett was born and raised in New York. In 2019, she was named one of *Teen Vogue*’s 21 Under 21 and a *Glamour* College Woman of the Year. Her first novel, *Full Disclosure*, received rave reviews from outlets such as *Entertainment Weekly*, the *Today Show*, and *The Guardian*, which called it “warm, funny and thoughtfully sex-positive, an impressive debut from a writer still in her teens.” Her second novel, *Off the Record* received three starred reviews. Her third novel, *Friday I’m in Love*, was an *IndieNext* Pick and received a starred review from *Publisher’s Weekly*. Camryn is also interested in film and recently graduated from NYU’s *Tisch School of the Arts*. You can find her on Twitter @dancingofpens, tweeting from a laptop named Stevie.

Discussion Questions

Money

Many chapters in *Friday I'm in Love* start with Mahalia's bank account balance, occasionally including a list of upcoming expenses. How does this affect your reading of the novel? Why do you think the author included this information? How does the subject of money affect Mahalia's decision-making throughout the novel? Why do you think the subject of money creates so much tension between Mahalia and Naomi?

Misogyny

"In most of the movies and shows I've seen, guys are the ones who like girls, and they're almost always weird about it. They stalk the girls or act like a girl they spoke to once suddenly belongs to them. They're territorial. Overbearing." (*Friday I'm in Love*, p. 18) This pattern of behavior is often referred to as misogyny or toxic masculinity. Is Mahalia successful at avoiding this in relation to Siobhan? How else does misogyny, internalized misogyny, and toxic masculinity, show up in the novel?

Pressure

After she's asked what she wants to be when she grows up, Mahalia thinks to herself, "I hate when adults ask this. They want us to be children and adults at the same time." (*Friday I'm in Love*, p. 119) What does Mahalia mean by this? How does the pressure affect Mahalia and her relationships? Do you know what you want to do when you grow up? Why do some adults think it's important for teens to have their future mapped out?

Racism

"I'm pretty sure you can't trust any white person who has an unhealthy obsession with *To Kill a Mockingbird*. It's not a proven scientific theory or anything, but on Wednesday, when Mr. Lewis starts class by announcing that his kids are Atticus and Harper, it makes me side-eye him." (*Friday I'm in Love*, p. 241) What do you think of Naomi's and Mahalia's comments on race and racism in *To Kill a Mockingbird*? How do you think Mr. Lewis could have better framed the discussion to address their perspectives and concerns?

Jealousy

In *Friday I'm in Love*, Danny's jealousy about Siobhan leaving him for Mahalia makes him act irrationally. What do you think his goal was in trying to out the two girls during the school assembly? Do you think Danny would have reacted similarly if Siobhan had left him for another guy at school? Why or why not?

Stigma

HIV and AIDS are stigmatized because they disproportionately affected certain groups early on. Pops says, "Some people don't understand, and some are just plain hateful. Some people hate HIV because of who they picture having the virus. People like us." (*Full Disclosure*, p. 112) Who are the "people like us" that Pops is referring to? How does stigma impact Simone throughout the book? How do Simone and others push back against stigma?

Discussion Questions (Continued)

Threats

Simone is blackmailed by someone wanting to expose her HIV status. (*Full Disclosure*) Josie is worried about the repercussions of exposing the man who has committed sexual assaults against numerous women. (*Off the Record*) Danny threatens to out Mahalia and Siobhan to the whole school. (*Friday I'm in Love*) What is at the core of these threats against each protagonist? Do you agree with how the protagonist reacted? Would you have done something different?

Sexuality

"If Pops goes out with Dad, people know he's queer. If Claudia goes out with Emma, people know she's queer. If you're bi, like Lydia, you can go out with a boyfriend and strangers will assume you're straight. It doesn't seem fair." (*Full Disclosure*, p. 95) Unpack this. Why do people tend to think about sexuality in terms of gay or straight? How could you and your friends try to make things more comfortable for bisexual people in your life, whether they are out or not?

#MeToo

What do you know about the #MeToo movement? Do you see evidence of it in popular culture and media beyond *Off the Record*? What do you think the effect of the #MeToo movement has been? Is it limited to Hollywood? Why or why not?

Power

"Sexual assault is a gigantic display of power. It's someone's way of saying, *I'm doing this to you* because we both know you can't do anything to stop it." (*Off the Record*, p. 191) There are different kinds of power and oppression highlighted throughout the novel. Consider how different people are affected by the power structures that keep them silenced. Why are the women who report sexual assault mainly white? How do other types of oppression impact the ability of some women to come forward with their own stories?

Black Joy

"[W]hen we have coming-of-age movies about Black kids just living, people don't really pay attention, but when you have all the misery and suffering of movies like *Precious*, people eat it up." (*Off the Record*, p. 14) Have you noticed this pattern in the media you consume?

What impact does this pattern have on how people understand Black people and communities, according to Josie?

Secrets

Simone, Josie, and Mahalia all have secrets that they are trying to expose or protect for various reasons. Consider these secrets and discuss why each character wants to keep or expose them. Is it okay to keep something a secret? What is the difference between keeping a secret for yourself and for someone else? How do power structures affect what information we share and how we share it?

Author-Specific Activity

Write a fan letter to Camryn Garrett. (You don't need to send it, but you could!)
If you're stuck on what to include, here are some ideas.

1. Which is your favorite book and why?
2. Who is your favorite character and why?
3. What themes stood out the most?
4. What was interesting or unique about the narrative?

Activities Relating to Reoccurring Themes

Labels for Many Reasons

Throughout Garrett's work, the subject of labels comes up repeatedly. Sometimes these labels help characters better understand themselves, like Mahalia coming to terms with her sexuality, and at other times labels are weaponized, like when people discover Simone's HIV status.

- Write down five labels that describe you or various aspects of your life, and write down how each label has affected your sense of self.
- Next, consider how you use labels to think about family, friends, and other people in your life. Write down some of these labels. What constraints can these labels put on your relationships? Compare your findings with a partner or small group.

Build Your Playlist

Consider the main themes of the three novels and develop a playlist for one of them. Think about the major scenes in your chosen novel and, either on your own or with a partner, come up with songs to accompany each of these scenes until you have a list of ten songs. You can use the playlist that Mahalia puts together for her coming out party as an example. Compare your playlist with others and see if you had any overlap. Discuss as a large group why you chose the songs you did, and how they relate to the major themes and scenes from each of the novels.

Dream Casting

Choose one of the novels and work with a group to cast a movie adaptation. Who would play the main characters? Record your reasons for each choice and then compare with other groups to see if you have any similar choices. After comparing your choices, would you change any of your original cast? Why? Why not?

This guide was written by Dr. Robert Bittner, YA Literature Specialist.



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