

Tell Everything

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Talking Points for TELL EVERYTHING

1. TELL EVERYTHING takes place in several locations – rural, suburban, small town, urban. How does each setting contribute to our understanding of the protagonist and of the story overall?
2. What is the significance of the title of this book?
3. In writing her “autobiographical” confession, Pauline comments that “some of the places changed; our names, too.” What is the author saying about truth and experience in TELL EVERYTHING by including Pauline’s imaginative recollections?
4. TELL EVERYTHING is told in a series of layers from a variety of sources: trial transcripts; tabloid accounts; television talk shows and newsmagazines, confession. Why do you think the author structured the novel this way? How do these layers relate to the story overall?
5. How much of the media’s response to Ramona Hawkes hinges on her gender? Is it true, as Pauline comments, that “nobody wants to convict a woman?” What is the author saying about our notions of female criminality and/or evil?
6. The author of TELL EVERYTHING blurs the line between victim and killer. As Pauline reveals the events that took place between her and Ramona and James, what conclusions do you draw about her role as victim or willing participant? Is there a grey area here? Where is the line of consent drawn?
7. How do Pauline’s fascinations with confinement and pain contribute to our understanding of her deeds and emotions? How much resulted from her experiences with Ramona? Do you think, as Pauline suggests herself, she would have been “normal” if she hadn’t moved to the suburbs? What do you think is the significance of margins and containers to this book?
8. In TELL EVERYTHING, it is important for Pauline to write her own story and to give herself the alias Peck. Why do you think this is? How have her experiences with Ramona contributed to her need to write and make art?
9. The characters in TELL EVERYTHING are so fascinated with their macabre fixations that they need to act them out. What is the author saying about the line between fantasy and reality?