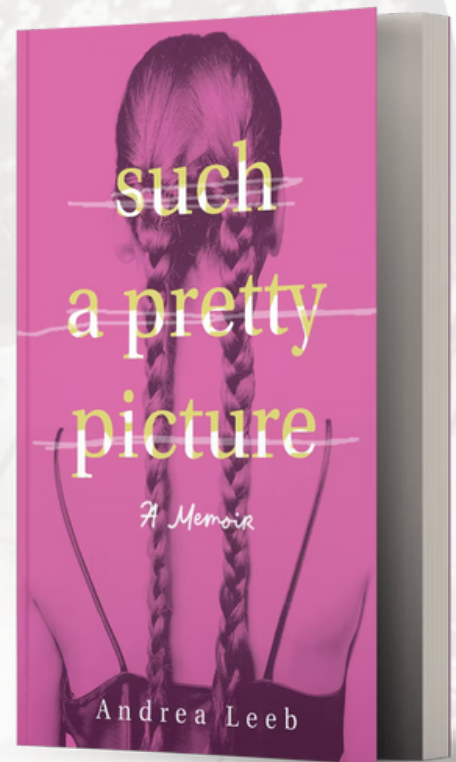


SUCH A PRETTY PICTURE

BOOK CLUB DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The first story Leeb tells of her childhood is that of her father sexually abusing her in the bathroom. Although Andrea is only four-and-a-half, she knows there is something strange about the way her father is touching her. When her mother walks into the bathroom to check on them, she howls and crumples to the floor—when she opens her eyes, she is blind. Why do you think Andrea opens with that story, and how does it set the stage for the rest of the memoir?

In her memoir, Andrea tells us that her sister, Sarai, was not sexually abused by their father. “I’d convinced myself that, like a twist on the story of Demeter and Persephone, my mother had surrendered one daughter to Hades in exchange for another?” How did you feel about Marlene protecting one daughter but not the other?



Marlene often tells her daughters that “Your father loves you.” Do you think that she believed that when she said it? Did you?

There are many heart-wrenching scenes in *Such A Pretty Picture*. Aside from the bath scene, which scene touched you the most and why?

Andrea’s writing style is economical, never overly dramatic, and at times almost clinical. She has stated that, given the inherent drama in the subject matter, she chose to make the language as economical and accessible to the reader as possible. Did she achieve that goal?

Reviewers have noted that *Such A Pretty Picture* is both literary and novelistic. Do you agree with that characterization? Do you think the novelistic style works?

Discuss what you think of Marlene. What were her strengths and weaknesses? Do you think her failure to protect her daughters was as bad or worse than David’s abuse?

In interviews and podcasts, Andrea has said that she was inspired to tell her story after reading the stories that other sexual assault survivors wrote during the #MeTooMovement. She has also said that it is her greatest hope that her memoir will help other survivors to tell their stories and to know that with therapy, healing is possible. Do you think that she achieved that goal? Why or why not?

Andrea Leeb
AUTHOR

SUCH A PRETTY PICTURE

BOOK CLUB DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Andrea dedicates the book to her sister, Sarai. Describe Andrea's relationship with Sarai, and the role that these girls played in each other's lives?

The memoir begins with a child's point of view and shifts to a teenager, then to a young woman, and finally ends when Andrea is thirty-three. How would you describe the shift in the narrator's tone?

Throughout the book and Andrea's childhood, there were other adults (teachers, psychiatrists) who saw that Andrea was suffering but did not intervene. This was in the 1960s and 1970s. Do you think things are different today? How and why?

Were you surprised to learn that, as an adult, Andrea chose to keep Marlene and, by default, her father in her life? What do you think of this decision, and why do you think she made it?

Andrea finally gets help after an incident on a New York City subway. She goes to therapy and then to a twelve-day inpatient rehab. While in the inpatient program, she develops a close relationship with another patient, a man named Bob. What did you think of their friendship? Were you disappointed to learn that they never saw each other again?

Many reviewers and readers have commented that, despite everything, Andrea is nonjudgmental about her parents, especially her mother. Did you find this to be true? Reading this book, were you able to be equally nonjudgmental?