

Book Group Discussion Guide for Shawn Klomparens' *Jessica Z.*

1. Upon learning the extent of the bombings at the beginning of the story, does Jessica's reaction seem excessive? How do her emotions change when she speaks to her mother?
2. Discuss Jessica's feelings about Patrick. Does she take him for granted? What is "the rule" and why have they established it?
3. Compare Jessica's perception of herself with the way she's seen by other characters in the book. Is her narration reliable?
4. After the party at Patrick's, Jessica runs into Josh on the stairway in her building. Was he really there to see Patrick? How does Jessica feel about Josh being in her apartment?
5. Discuss Josh's presentation at the seminar. Why does Jessica allow herself to trust Josh so quickly after? Who is being manipulated by whom?
6. How does Jessica feel about Josh's interaction with the Nevada state trooper? Is she repulsed, attracted, or both?
7. Discuss Gert. Why is he intimidated by Josh?
8. The novel deals with sibling relationships. Compare Jessica's relationship with Katie to the one between Josh and his sister.
9. After they arrive at Jessica's apartment, how do her perceptions of her mother and sister change?
10. Is it unreasonable or unhealthy for Jessica to go to Ohio? What does she learn about Josh when she's there, particularly after she sees Gert and speaks with Joe?
11. How does Emily's secret define her? How has it shaped Josh?
12. What will Emily ultimately do about Tim?
13. Why does Jessica leave some of her things on the plane when she's home?

Shawn Klomparens is available to speak with book groups either by phone or, if travel is reasonable, in person. Contact him at klomp@shawnyklomparens.com to arrange a meeting with your group.