

# Lay Your Body Down

## AMY SUITER CLARKE



### About the author

Amy Suiter Clarke is the author of psychological thrillers, including her debut, *Girl, 11*. Originally from a small town in Minnesota, she completed an undergraduate degree in theatre in the Twin Cities and earned an MFA at Kingston University in London. She lives in Melbourne, Australia with her husband and twin sons.

### About the book

*Pastor Rick tells us women are created to serve, to be pure, to submit, to be a delight to their husbands. Who are we to deny the very nature our Creator has built within us?*

When Del Walker fled her small hometown and its cult-like church six years ago, she vowed never to go back. Lars, the love of her life, was about to marry local golden girl Eve, author of a popular blog about the church's 'Noble Wife' teachings.

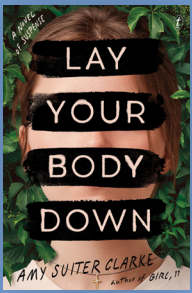
But now Lars is dead, and Del is convinced it couldn't have been an accident.

When she returns for the funeral, she discovers the church—and the insidious, patriarchal teachings of Pastor Rick Franklin—has taken over the town. And Eve isn't acting much like a grieving widow.

Del is determined to cut through the church's lies and corruption to find out what really happened to Lars—even if it means confronting memories she's spent years trying to bury.

### Discussion questions

1. Although Del and Eve grew up in the same environment, they are very different people as adults. Why do you think that is? Do you believe they become more similar again by the end of the book?
2. Imagine that Del and Lars stayed together and eventually got married. Do you think she would have still left Messiah eventually? Why or why not?
3. Del has stopped going to church and feels disconnected from religion at the start of the novel, but she maintains her faith. How do you feel about this? Is her journey of doubt and discovery familiar to you?
4. Several women in this book reckon with internalised misogyny throughout. Del herself refuses to believe Eve and Esha, choosing instead to trust Finn and Nathaniel implicitly. Why do you think that is?
5. Although the majority of people enforcing Messiah's patriarchal structure are men, several women do as well, including Colette and Del's mother. Aside from internalised misogyny, what are some other reasons women sign on to an ideology where they are inferior?
6. In addition to their discussions about the church's oppression of women, Del and Esha discuss the racism and white supremacy inherent in their upbringing. How did you feel about this conversation? What do you think about Del's journey



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so far in learning about these issues, and what more does she have to learn?

7. This novel is told in both narrative and epistolary forms. What do you think about how Eve's blog and Del's diary were used to provide context and advance the story for both characters? Were there any elements of their past you wish the blog or diary entries had included?
8. Despite Rick Franklin's own taped confession and all the accusations against him in Parker's article, by the end of the book it seems like Messiah Church has not disavowed him. Do you think that's realistic, or do you think more members would have left once the truth came out?
9. Although we don't know if they will stay together, Del and Finn decide to continue their relationship at the end of the novel. How do you feel about this, given all that happened between them?
10. It is not clearly stated who pulled the trigger and shot Rick. Who do you think did it, and why?