



YOUNG ADULT FICTION

WRECKED by MARIA PADIAN

On the same night college freshman Haley sustains a career-ending concussion on the soccer field, her bookish roommate Jenny arrives home shell-shocked from a wild party. The next morning, on the other side of campus, Jordan brags to his housemate, Richard, about the cute freshman he hooked up with. When Jenny formally accuses Jordan of rape, gossip spreads like wildfire through the campus.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

MARIA PADIAN is a graduate of Middlebury College (BA) and the University of Virginia (MA). She is a freelance writer, essayist, and author of young adult novels, including *Brett McCarthy: Work in Progress*, *Jersey Tomatoes Are the Best*, and *Out of Nowhere*. Maria lives with her family in Brunswick, Maine.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does the “fishing” metaphor on pages 41 and 42 tell us about Jordan’s attitude toward sex and women? What does the metaphor about college as a “buffet” mean?
2. Once Jenny reports the rape, to what extent is she free to make her own choices about everything that follows? Who respects her boundaries? Who pushes them?
3. On page 146, Richard expresses the idea that sometimes “yes the night before turns into no the morning after.” What is the difference between this perception and what happened to Jenny?
4. On page 48, Jenny wonders, “How come I didn’t fight him off?” We later learn why: her body froze in panic. This is a common physiological stress response among sexual assault survivors—not “fight or flight,” but “freeze.” How does Jenny’s behavior during the assault—saying, “I’m so tired,” passing out, and being paralyzed—compare with the behavior of a person who is enthusiastically consenting to sex? If a person’s consent is not verbal, are there any other ways they might communicate “yes”?
5. On page 170, Haley notes “Jenny was complicated.” What does Jenny say or do to that leads Haley to that conclusion? How does what happens to Jenny influence how others around her interact with her and/or perceive her?
6. If you were named as a witness by either side in this case and had to speak with the dean, would that be an easy conversation? What might you be worried about? What do you think of Dean Hunt’s comment that witnesses seemed more concerned with protecting themselves than with the truth?
7. What is the “underlying problem” Dean Hunt refers to on page 319, when he compares the sexual assault case to the plagiarism case?
8. What do you think of Dean Hunt’s efforts to have the accused students withdraw? Would it surprise you to learn that in reality, only about 10–30 percent of college students who are found responsible for sexual misconduct are expelled?
9. What is “wrecked” in the story? What does Richard mean when he says, “I think this was broken beyond repair” (page 351)?
10. What does Richard think about the idea of asking, “Can I kiss you?” before Matt Trainor’s consent presentation? What does he think about it afterward?
11. Imagine that Jordan saw Matt Trainor’s consent talk. What would he think or say about the idea of asking (page 300), “Can I kiss you?”
12. Imagine a college conduct system in which the evidence available would have been enough to find Jordan responsible for violating the code of conduct. How would the story have been different?