

**1.**

---

**BURST  
READING GUIDE**

**When you first met Viva and Charlotte, what did you think about their relationship?**

**Were there any emotions under the surface that you noticed? What did you think about their nomadic life?**

**2.**

---

**BURST  
READING GUIDE**

**On page 15, Viva is watching her mother, noting how beautiful she is. At one point, Otis writes, “Viva obsessively practiced her mother’s face when her back was turned. It seemed to her, if she did this enough, Charlotte’s features might one day become her own.”**



## **2. (CONT.)**

# **BURST READING GUIDE**

**How does this scene characterize Viva's feelings for her mother?**

**How does this intersect with (or contradict) how Viva seems to feel about Charlotte's behavior?**

**3.**

---

**BURST  
READING GUIDE**

**On page 25, when Charlotte is returning from having passed out on the beach, Viva is lying in bed listening to what is happening outside. “Like a song cutting through static on the radio, Viva could hear something else: shame. But you had to have a trained ear to pick it up.”**



### **3. (CONT.)**

---

## **BURST READING GUIDE**

**What is Viva's role with Charlotte, compared to the anticipated role of a daughter with her mother?**

**How do you think Viva feels about being able to pick out when Charlotte is experiencing shame?**

# 4.

## BURST READING GUIDE

**When Charlotte puts Viva in a free dance class (pg. 29), Otis writes, “even without shoes, she could see Viva had something the others did not. It was there in her sense of rhythm and the ease with which she picked up the choreography.” Later (pg. 44), Charlotte tells Viva, “I’m going to give it to you straight—your dancing needs work, but I think you’ve got something.”**



## **4. (CONT.)**

# **BURST READING GUIDE**

**Why do you think Charlotte is so forthright with Viva?**

**How does Viva handle these moments of tough love?**

**5.**

---

**BURST  
READING GUIDE**

**While Charlotte is watching Viva dance in that first dance class, Charlotte discovers she envies Viva’s energy (pg. 30). “Charlotte would give anything to feel the sense of transport she saw Viva experience when she danced. She felt a stab of guilt. What kind of mother envied her own daughter’s joy?”**





## **5. (CONT.)**

# **BURST READING GUIDE**

**Have you ever had an experience like this, where you were surprised by feelings of envy?**

**Do you think Charlotte's feelings here ever translated to how she treated Viva? Why or why not?**

**6.**

---

**BURST  
READING GUIDE**

**Viva was always wanting to know more about her father, and on page 54, Charlotte finally tells her that he never met Viva. Viva feels joy and happiness from this information “because if a person has never met you, how could they not like you?”.**



## **6. (CONT.)**

# **BURST READING GUIDE**

**What about Viva's childhood might make her worried that her father might not like her?**

**Were you surprised by Viva's reaction to this news?**

7.

---

**BURST  
READING GUIDE**

**In Chapter 13, Viva is practicing her senior solo and is having trouble remembering some of the steps. She realizes that she is struggling with a fear that she isn't good enough to compete with professional dancers.**



## **7. (CONT.)**

# **BURST READING GUIDE**

**Where do you think this fear came from for Viva?**

**Do you think that fear is the only thing impacting her ability to remember the steps?**

**8.**

---

**BURST  
READING GUIDE**

**On page 113, Viva calls Charlotte, admitting that she is worried about performing. Charlotte tells her she believes she can do it “because you’re talented, and if you can’t believe that right now, I’ll believe it for you. Now, go in the theater, and I’ll be there as soon as I can.”**



## **8. (CONT.)**

# **BURST READING GUIDE**

**Did you think that Charlotte was going to see Viva before she performed? Was it a surprise to you that she didn't?**

**Why do you think Charlotte felt that sitting in the audience would be enough?**

**Why do you think Charlotte later tells Viva that she “helped” her with her dance?**

9.

---

**BURST  
READING GUIDE**

**After Viva hurts her knee and is staying with Charlotte, she and Charlotte get into a fight when Viva tries to correct Charlotte's posture. Viva tells her mother, "You don't know what it's like to put in the time," to which Charlotte responds, "I put my time into you."**





## 9. (CONT.)

# BURST READING GUIDE

**How did you feel about Viva's response to Charlotte saying she put her time into Viva?**

**Do you think Charlotte resents Viva for being born? Or do you think she resents her for leaving? Or both?**

**10.**

**BURST  
READING GUIDE**

**On page 157, the reader learns that Charlotte knew she was pregnant while she was still with Wilson and decided to leave him because he “didn’t love her as much as she loved him.” Later, on pages 190 and 191, Charlotte decides to write to Wilson to tell him about Viva.**



## **10. (CONT.)**

# **BURST READING GUIDE**

**Why do you think Charlotte felt that Wilson wasn't someone she could raise a child with?**

**What changed her mind about telling him?**

# 11.

## BURST READING GUIDE

**In Chapter Eighteen, the reader meets Calla Fortuni, one of Viva's students at Findley Academy.**

**What do you think Viva saw in Calla that made her spend more time supporting her?**

**Do you think Viva saw some of herself in Calla? Why or why not?**

**12.**

**BURST  
READING GUIDE**

**On pages 216 and 217,  
Charlotte goes to the beach  
and is swept away by the  
large waves.**

**Did you initially recognize  
that Charlotte had died?  
Why or why not?**

**What about Charlotte dying  
this way surprised you? What  
didn't surprise you?**

**13.**

---

**BURST  
READING GUIDE**

**Viva's drinking has already been getting worse and worse since she hurt her knee, but it spirals out of control after Charlotte's death and even gets her fired from her job.**



## **13. (CONT.)**

# **BURST READING GUIDE**

**Viva never wanted to turn out like her mother, but in some ways she did. What do you think got her to that point?**

**What about Charlotte's death amplified her drinking?**

**As the book ends, it looks as if Viva is attempting to be sober. Do you think she will be able to do what Charlotte couldn't and stay sober? Why or why not?**

**14.**

---

**BURST  
READING GUIDE**

**While Viva is meeting Wilson, she recalls a moment from her childhood when Charlotte was braiding her hair and traced the words “You Are Mine” on her back.**





## **14. (CONT.)**

# **BURST READING GUIDE**

**How do you think this influenced Viva's conversation and relationship with Wilson?**

**Why do you think Charlotte was so intent on Viva being hers? What does this say about their relationship as a whole?**

**15.**

**BURST  
READING GUIDE**

**On page 4, Otis writes, “When Viva learned the planets in science class, Mrs. Kenmore said that when Earth is closest to the sun that point is called a perihelion, and that was how she thought of herself and her mother. She was the closest anyone could get to Charlotte, maybe until the end of time.”**



## **15. (CONT.)**

# **BURST READING GUIDE**

**How did you feel about this line when you first read it? Have your feelings changed now that you've completed the book?**

**Do you think this statement is true of Charlotte and Viva? How did this statement foreshadow the remainder of the book (or did it)?**