

Reading Group Guide for
Deadly Devotion: A Novel
PORT ASTER SECRETS, #1
by Sandra Orchard

1. Tom operates under the assumption that people are rarely what they seem. What problems arise from having this attitude toward everyone with whom you interact?
2. Having received conflicting messages (between what her mother said vs. how she acted) about her father's innocence, Kate is reluctant to seek out the truth about him for fear she might discover he wasn't the man she wants to believe he was. Have you ever resisted learning the true nature of someone in your life? Did you eventually learn the truth? How might you handle such a situation differently next time?
3. Since Daisy is Kate's most esteemed example of a true believer in God, Kate can't believe Daisy would take her own life. Have you ever been disillusioned by the actions of someone you esteemed? How did it affect your attitude toward what you valued?
4. Kate was raised to be a very private person, because of her family secrets. She feels shame and fear that if people knew about her father, they wouldn't want to be associated with her. Likewise, Chief Brewster fears being judged unfairly because of his father's criminal past. Have you ever experienced similar feelings—that you must be someone else to be presentable? At the end of the book, Kate makes a decision to confront her past. How might you confront your shame and experience healing?
5. While Kate is an avid proponent of taking a natural approach to health, one character in the story refers to herbal remedies this way: "If you ask me, all that eye of newt stuff is just another way to part a fool from his money." What do you think about herbal remedies?
6. Kate's friend Julie tries to be supportive and encourage Kate to talk about what she's feeling, often over a carton of ice cream. How do you offer emotional support to friends who are hurting?

7. While Tom acknowledges an attraction to Kate, he doubts he could ever trust his heart to another person after the betrayals he's seen and experienced. Has a betrayal in your life left you reluctant to love with all your heart? Has that protected you from being hurt? Kept you from experiencing good things?
8. Tom's dad is having a hard time seeing past his own pain until he starts helping Tom with the investigation. How does helping others help you?
9. Kate's determination to clear her mentor's name propels her into dangerous situations. Have you or would you willingly put your own well-being at risk to see justice served? Share an example.
10. At the beginning of the book, Kate's roommate doubts Kate could ever suspect anyone of being a murderer. Kate is the type of person who always sees the best in people. However, by the end of the book, she's seen the proof of Tom's motto—people are rarely what they seem. Yet, even knowing the unscrupulous things Edward Smythe has done, she defends him. She sees the hurting man inside and wants to help him. Can you see past what people do or say to the hurting person who'd benefit from your friendship?



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