



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

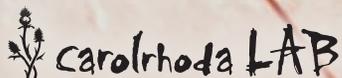
Carrie Mesrobian is an instructor at the Loft Literary Center in Minneapolis. Her debut novel, *Sex & Violence*, was called one of the best books of 2013 by *Kirkus Reviews* and *Publishers Weekly* and was a finalist for the American Library Association's William C. Morris Award for best debut young adult novel. Visit Carrie online at www.carriemesrobian.com.



Perfectly Good White Boy
Carrie Mesrobian
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"Carrie Mesrobian is a truly fearless writer, one to envy and watch."

—Nova Ren Suma, author of *Imaginary Girls* and *17 & Gone*

"*Perfectly Good White Boy* is a perfectly great, moving, and memorable story about growing up in an often ridiculous world."

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CARRIE MESROBIAN



DISCUSSION GUIDE

Sean Norwhalt can read between the lines.

"You never know where we'll end up. There's so much possibility in life, you know?" Hallie said.

He knows she just dumped him. He was a perfectly good summer boyfriend, but now she's off to college, and he's still got another year to go. Her pep talk about futures and "possibilities" isn't exactly comforting. Sean's pretty sure he's seen his future and its "possibilities," and they all look

Disposable.

Like the crappy rental his family moved into when his dad left.

Like all the unwanted filthy old clothes he stuffs into the rag baler at his thrift-store job.

Like everything good he's ever known.

The only hopeful possibilities in Sean's life are the Marine Corps, where no one expected he'd go, and Neechie Albertson, whom he never expected to care about.

"We're something else. Some other thing. I don't know what you'd call it. Maybe there's a word, though. Maybe I'll think of it tomorrow, when it won't matter," Neechie said.

Carrie Mesrobian follows her critically acclaimed debut, **SEX & VIOLENCE**, with another powerful and wrenching portrait of a teenage boy on the precipice of the new American future.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Explain Hallie's "rationale" and "standards" for sex. How does it compare to other characters' ideas on sex in *Perfectly Good White Boy*? In other books you've read?
2. Hallie calls Sean brave and tough, but Sean doesn't think he's brave when it counts. What might be some of the situations that "count" that occur while Sean is in high school? What are his reactions in these situations?
3. How might Hallie describe their summer relationship? Why do you think she started it and what did she want from it? What did Sean want from it?
4. Describe a stereotypical teen relationship. How do Hallie and Sean fit, or not fit, that stereotype?
5. While deer hunting, Brad doesn't get his tag. Who convinces him not to fill it and why does he listen to this person?
6. Sean is surprised to learn that Neechie is hooking up with Tristan. What does Neechie get out of hooking up? What are the benefits for Tristan?
7. How do Neechie and Sean become friends? Compare and contrast Neechie and Sean's friendship with Hallie and Sean's relationship.
8. Describe Eddie. Why are he and Sean friends?
9. What character do we mostly know only through what Sean tells us? Describe him.
10. In chapter ten, Sean's attitude toward Hallie changes. How does it change and what are some reasons that he might treat her differently?
11. When does Sean feel like he's officially Neechie's friend and what does she do to show him that? What does he realize around the same time?
12. Sean hates his house, yet Neechie likes hanging out there. What does Neechie see that Sean is oblivious to?
13. Neechie calls Sean brave when he teaches her how to do push-ups while she's high. He doesn't correct her. Why might he have corrected Hallie at the beginning but not Neechie?
14. Why doesn't Sean watch TV? Why doesn't he admit this to Neechie?
15. How does your perception of Tristan change as Neechie tells Sean more about their relationship?
16. Sean doesn't question why Hallie wants to have sex with him, but he does say that she often is the one who texts him. What are some reasons she might have for texting him?
17. Sean doesn't seem to think Libby has much of a personality and doesn't give much thought to her. Describe Sean from Libby's perspective.
18. Taking the ASVAB at the Military Entrance Processing Stations scares Sean, especially because only he and Sergeant Kendall know about his appointment. Why can't Sean talk to Neechie about going to the MEPS?
19. How did Brad use the threat of joining the Army to his advantage? What does Sean want to get out of the Marines?
20. After his day with the Marines, Sean feels like getting rid of anything illegal he may have and also "apologizing to everyone for everything...wiping everything clean." Who are some of the people he would apologize to, and what for?
21. Sean initially doesn't tell the reader what happened with Eddie that made him make a "deal" with himself not to hit anyone again. What happened in the library and why did Sean snap?
22. When Sean finds his dying dog, his reaction is much different than when he finds his dying father. How do his reactions differ? Are there any similarities?