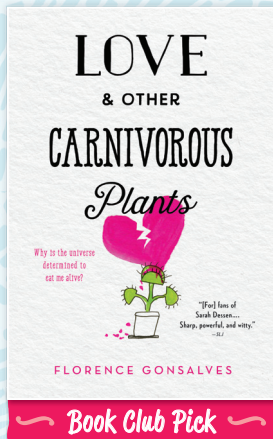


## LOVE & OTHER CARNIVOROUS *Plants* by FLORENCE GONSALVES

**“THIS GENUINELY FUNNY NOVEL ABOUT SOME HARROWING TOPICS MANAGES TO BALANCE HUMOR AND PATHOS PERFECTLY.”**

—Booklist (starred review)



### ABOUT THE BOOK:

Freshman year at Harvard was the most anticlimactic one of Danny’s life. She’s failing pre-med and drifting apart from her best friend. One by one, Danny is losing all the underpinnings of her identity. When she finds herself attracted to a girl who she met in rehab for an eating disorder, she feels like she might be finding a new sense of self. But when tragedy strikes, her self-destructive tendencies return as she struggles to discover who that self really is. With a memorable voice that’s hilarious and heartbreaking, this debut novel captures the turning point between adolescence and the uncertainty of the future.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. The novel opens with a Leonard Cohen lyric, “There is a crack in everything. That’s how the light gets in.” Why do you think the author chose this quotation?
2. Danny claims, “I’m fantastic at putting things in a brain drawer and losing track of them entirely” (page 2). What does she mean? How can this skill backfire?
3. Although Danny considers Sara her best friend, their relationship has experienced some turmoil. How do their coping mechanisms and communication skills differ?
4. When Danny was at St. John’s, Bugg passed her notes containing the Mary Oliver poem “Wild Geese,” which you can find on page 104. What do you think of the poem? How does it relate to Danny’s mental state?
5. How did you react when Danny found out Sara had died? Did it change the way you view the first half of the novel and Sara as a character? Why or why not?
6. When Bugg catches Danny binge eating and drinking, she says, “There’s a distinct line between carefree and dangerous” (page 227). Do you agree? Why is this line sometimes difficult to identify or why not?
7. How does Danny eventually make peace with Sara?
8. Why is Danny afraid to tell her parents about her relationship with Bugg even though she knows they are progressive people?
9. Despite her excitement to travel the world with Bugg, why does Danny eventually decide she needs to return home? What is the Undiagnosable Place where she says she must go?
10. The novel ends with Danny’s credo, “Dandelion Theory.” Which of the guidelines stand out to you in particular?
11. Even though Danny has started college, the novel is still considered a young adult book. Why do you think that is? What are some themes that might differentiate a YA novel from an adult novel about a young person? Do you think the distinction is important?