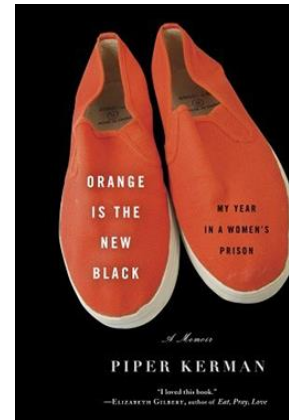


Discussion Questions for Orange Is the New Black by Piper Kerman

These discussion questions were prepared by the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) for the *Reader with a Cause* book club on Goodreads.

If you like our questions please feel free to use them – and don't forget to join the conversation online at
https://www.goodreads.com/topic/group_folder/200241



1. Danbury in the Media:

Did you look up the articles Kerman mentioned while you read the book, because we sure did! (Links below) What did you think about the characterizations of prison life that were made by the authors of these articles vs. Kerman's characterizations? Who are you more inclined to believe?

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(198) *"I have been subscribing to People magazine for over 35 years. And now I'm the scum of the earth? Are you the scum of the earth, Piper?"* [Annette]

>>"A World Turned Upside Down," *People Magazine*, 3/22/2004
<http://www.people.com/people/archive/article/0,,20149608,00.html>

(200) *"The reporter got many minor facts wrong, such as that there were four nuns resident, and that we could buy CD players at the commissary. Women were outraged by the false claim that we could buy Haagen-Dazs ice cream."*

>>"Don't Worry, Martha, It's Like a Big Hotel," *Hartford Courant*, 9/19/2004
http://articles.courant.com/2004-09-19/news/0409190133_1_martha-stewart-five-month-sentence-prison-camp

(254) *"On December 27 people got their Sunday New York Times in the Monday mail...I scurried to my bunk with the paper; Larry had a piece in it, and not just any piece. It was the "Modern Love" column, the weekly personal essay about love and relationships."*

>>"Hear That Wedding March Often Enough, You Fall in Step," *The New York Times*, 12/26/2004
http://www.nytimes.com/2004/12/26/fashion/26LOVE.html?_r=0

Follow-up Modern Love column (not mentioned in the book):

>>"A Life to Live, This Side of the Bars," *The New York Times*, 3/25/2010
http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/28/fashion/28Love.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

...and letters in response:



>>“Letters on a Modern Love Essay About a Woman in Prison,” 4/2/2010
<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/04/fashion/04letters-1.html>

2. Life Behind Bars:

How well do you think Kerman depicted life behind bars for women in low-security prisons? Were there any aspects of prison life that surprised you?

3. Privilege & Oppression in OITNB

Kerman’s race, education, and socioeconomic status are noted – often – in the book as being different than the “average” inmate. She speculates that her sentence is shorter than it could have been due to these factors.

(112) *Finn looked me up and down. “What the f*ck are you doing in here? We don’t see women like you much.”*

How does racism and classism impact the experiences of Piper and the other inmates on the inside? And how does it impact the issues women face when re-entering society after leaving prison?

4. The Women You Meet

Kerman did a great job writing about the women she met in prison, and writing them in an honest, empathetic way. (We only wish she would have told us more!) Who did you most enjoy reading about – Jae, Yoga Janet, Delicious, Pop, Carlotta, Nina, Little Janet, Miss Malcolm, or someone else? Who did you want to learn more about?

5. Book vs. Show

Now that you’ve read the book and watched the Netflix show, what do you think about the differences between the two? (Of which there are MANY!) Did you think one did a better job over the other telling the story of women in prison?

6. Reaction Thread

While OITNB isn’t fiction -- so there aren’t technically any “spoilers” -- there is still plenty to react to! What did you think of the book, overall?