**CRUSH by Ada Calhoun – Reader’s Group Questions**

1. Throughout *Crush*, the narrator constantly negotiates and renegotiates the terms of her desire and how she expresses it. How does this radical approach to introspection affect her relationships with friends, family, and lovers?
2. From the very beginning, the balance between the narrator and Paul in their marriage feels lopsided; however, she remains largely warm and optimistic throughout their relationship. How much of that positivity comes from her personality and how much comes from an inner resolve to make their marriage work?
3. The narrator makes it very clear that she misses kissing and the sweet intimacy that emerges from it, but she’s willing to sacrifice that desire for the sake of stability. Do you think that opening up the marriage created instability? Or did it highlight problems that were already there?
4. Beyond the romantic and sexual dimensions, the narrator demonstrates concern for her marriage on the grounds of her son Nate’s wellbeing, the expectations of her mother, and her idea for what her life should look like. How do social pressures like these affect women’s ability to live their most fulfilling life?
5. Why does Paul’s initial push for polyamory look so different from his later insistence on it? Do you think his intentions were the same all the way through? If not, when did they shift?
6. David enters the narrator’s life at a distance, but the intensity of their bond grows so rapidly that their collision seems almost inevitable. In what ways does their relationship mirror Paul’s own affair?
7. Writing and books play a huge role in the lives of the narrator, Paul, and David. How do David’s book recommendations stand apart from Paul’s suggestion that they read *Polysecure* together?
8. What does the narrator’s own flood of literary and poetic references through the novel say about her and how she understands her own life? Does that vision seem in-line with Paul or David’s perspectives on the life they’re living?
9. The narrator frequently returns to Veronica’s presence and advice, as well as her mother’s, for grounding throughout the novel. And when the married couple eventually goes to therapy, their therapist is also a woman. How are relationships between women able to cut across romantic relationships? What kind of honesty is present there that is hard to find elsewhere?