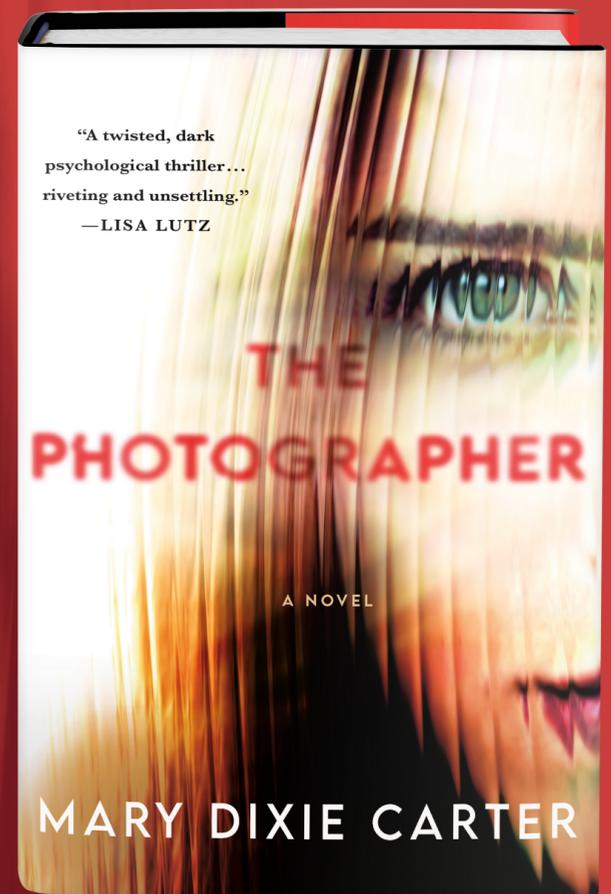


# THE PHOTOGRAPHER

## Discussion Guide

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1. In the first chapter, we're introduced to our narrator and protagonist, Delta Dawn, who says, "It was obvious to me that you need to immerse yourself in the lifestyle if you want to fit in, if you want people to believe that you belong to their world. It's a matter of osmosis." How does this observation inform Delta's worldview? The themes of the book itself? What does this statement tell you about Delta as a character?
2. A major theme of the book is appearance versus reality. Do you think that Delta feels pressure from society for her life to appear a certain way, or does she put that pressure on herself? What about Amelia? Natalie, even—as she starts to form her persona?
3. At one point, Delta describes herself as a "voyeur," defined by Merriam-Webster as "a prying observer who is usually seeking the sordid or the scandalous." Do you think this word accurately describes Delta at the beginning of the novel? If so, would you say it's still true by the end?
4. What do you think it is about the Straubs in particular that makes Delta feel so close to them? What do you think they see in her? Pure opportunity and selfishness, or something more heartfelt?
5. In chapter 3, Delta asks the audience, "Who's to say that the memory I create is any less 'true' than the original?" Memory is, indeed, a tricky thing; do you think any other characters in this novel "create" their memories to a certain extent? Can you remember a time when you yourself may have done this—for example, a childhood moment that you and a sibling remember entirely differently?
6. Motherhood in its many forms is a major theme of *The Photographer*. Do you think Amelia is a "good" mother? Delta? How does the book as a whole inform your idea of the social expectations placed on mothers?



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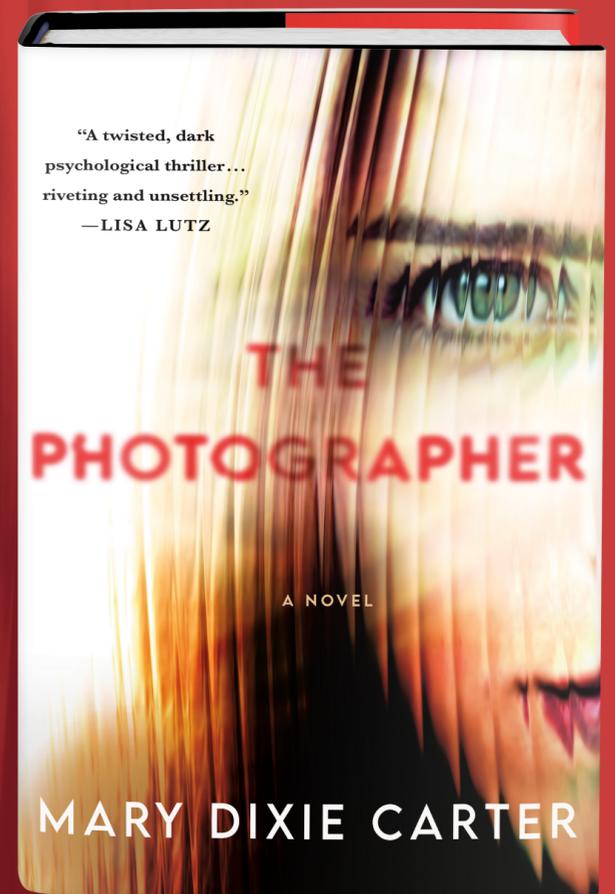
MINOTAUR BOOKS

# THE PHOTOGRAPHER

## Discussion Guide

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7. As Amelia sings—and Delta herself then notes—Delta is named after a famous Tanya Tucker song. Take a few minutes and listen to the song or read the lyrics. Do you see any correlations between the Delta Dawn in the song and the protagonist of *The Photographer*? Why do you think the author chose this as her main character's namesake?
8. Though Delta considers herself an astute observer of human nature, able to fit in anywhere, we as readers are given a peek behind the curtain she shows to the rest of the world. What does this discrepancy—between the Delta we see photoshopping images alone in her apartment and the Delta chatting and ingratiating herself with the Straubs—say about our ability to truly know other people?
9. In chapter 16, Delta says about Natalie's proposed photography subject, "Natalie was looking to unmask." How does this indicate that Delta's and Natalie's styles of photography would be different? What do those potential differences say about their characterizations?
10. Does Delta remind you of any other characters from literature who have styled their own versions of themselves to appear a certain way to those around them? Jay Gatsby, for example?
11. What do you think of the ending? How much sympathy—or not—do you feel for Delta? Did your opinion of her change as you read the novel? What do you anticipate her doing next?



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