

Searching for Beautiful, by Nyrae Dawn
Readers Group Guide

Searching for Beautiful is the story of Brynn Da Luca, a teenage girl trying to reclaim her life and self after her mother dies and she becomes pregnant with a much older boy's baby. In this novel, author Nyrae Dawn explores the themes of friendship, love, honesty, loss, regret, creativity, self-worth, and hope.

1. The novel begins with Brynn telling Jason she is pregnant. How is his reaction different than she expects? Why? What do we learn about Jason in this scene? What do we learn about Brynn? What does Brynn see in Jason? Why is she with him?
2. In what ways does the romantic story of how her parents met influence the choices Brynn makes?
3. The lawyer discourages Brynn and her father from pressing charges against Jason. Was this the right thing to do? Why or why not?
4. Why is Brynn's relationship with her dad so difficult?
5. We learn that Brynn's friends, Ellie and Diana, loved her mother almost as much as she did. Is it realistic that a sixteen-year-old girl and her friends would want to hang out with her mother? What is it about Brynn's mother that makes her so appealing to her friends?
6. Brynn's mother gives her a memory gift every year at Christmas. Has anyone ever given you a memory gift? What would make a good memory gift for you?
7. When Brynn begins school after her summer ordeal, she feels ignored and shunned. She knows people are talking about her. Why doesn't she reach out to her friends, or protect herself from the false rumors?
8. Brynn's mother encourages her to find her passion by allowing her to try out different activities, and this is how she discovers pottery making. Discuss the significance of creativity for Brynn, Christian, and Emery.
9. When Christian comes back into her life, Brynn slowly begins to heal. In what ways does Christian help her to do this? Why is she so conflicted in her feelings toward him?
10. How does Brenda further Brynn's healing process?
11. In what ways does Brynn's attendance at the community center also further her healing?
12. On page 135, Brynn realizes that if she had been more confident in herself, she might not have fallen for Jason. Is this true in your experience? How needy are teenage girls when it comes to being loved? See also page 237, where Brynn states that "Love is such a powerful thing. My whole life, I've been looking for it."
13. Brynn knows her friend Emery is still seeing her abusive boyfriend, and she struggles with whether to tell someone or betray her friend's trust. Which is the right choice? What would you do in a similar situation?
14. Christian describes to Brynn the difference between boys and girls in dealing with friendship and problems. Do you agree with Christian's assessment? How do boys and girls differ in how they deal with friends and problems?
15. Christian takes Brynn to egg the billboard of Jason, which is a crime. Was this the right thing to do? Should authors of young adult novels encourage readers to commit vandalism?

16. After she learns of Jason's fatal accident, Brynn blames herself for the death of the young girl who was with him. Do you agree that she is to blame? Brynn's father states that "The right thing to do is never completely clear." Is this true in your experience? Are there times when the right decision *is* completely clear?
17. On page 285, Brynn states that she likes Christian, but liking him doesn't make her weak, unless she makes herself *need* him. Does needing a boy make you weak? What makes a relationship strong and healthy? What makes a person strong and healthy?
18. How does Brynn's experience as an adopted child help Emery with her decision to give her baby up? Did Emery make the right decision?
19. As Brynn and Christian are leaving for the dance, Brynn's father states that her mother would love to see her now. Brynn replies, "She sees me." How are our loved ones who are gone still with us?
20. Discuss the meaning of the title, Searching for Beautiful.

