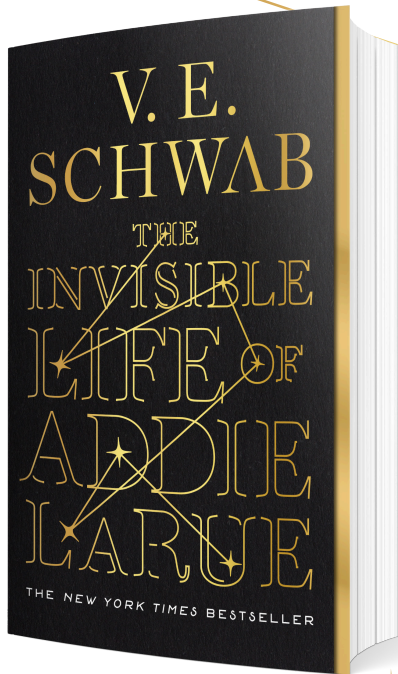


READING GROUP GUIDE



VICTORIA "V.E." SCHWAB (she/her) is the #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of more than a dozen books, including the acclaimed Shades of Magic series, Villains series, *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue*, *This Savage Song*, and *Our Dark Duet*. Her work has received critical acclaim, been featured in the *New York Times*, *Entertainment Weekly*, *Washington Post* and more, translated into more than a dozen languages, and has been optioned for television and film. When she's not haunting Paris streets or trudging up English hillsides, she lives in Edinburgh, Scotland and is usually tucked in the corner of a coffee shop, dreaming up monsters.

Photo credit: Jenna Maurice

1. What are the best and worst things about Addie's invisible life? What is the emotional toll of being unable to imprint herself on the heart and mind of another person? When does it give her an advantage?
2. Discuss the intense power struggle between Addie and Luc. What makes him such a master of seduction? How does Addie reclaim her power and agency over the course of the centuries?
3. Addie slips into the homes (and even the clothes) of people from all walks of life. Which abode did you like the best? If Addie borrowed your house, what would she enjoy the most about the contents of your cupboards and your closets?
4. As we meet Addie's many lovers, Remy stands out as the first man who lived up to her girlhood fantasies. On the magical night they met, Addie was dressed in a pair of trousers, a buttoned coat, and a tricorne hat. How did her disguise (as "Thomas") stoke their passion?
5. Living without a bank account or a phone or an address, Addie is reduced to pilfering and theft to quell her physical suffering. Is it a blessing or a curse that she only has to worry about momentary suffering, not survival? What new appreciation do you have for the ordinary things you count on to make it through difficult times?
6. In Part Three, Chapter II, the author writes, "The time between Thursday night and Saturday afternoon is merciless, every second doled out with the care of an old woman counting pennies to pay for bread. Not once does it seem to quicken, not once does she lose track of it. She can't seem to spend it, or waste it, or even misplace it." How does the possibility of an infinite lifespan change the way Addie sees life itself?
7. Addie's situation is transformed when she steps into *The Last Word* for the first time. Discuss the role of the written word in her life. What does her taste in books say about her? What does it mean for her to be deprived of a lasting version of her own life story?
8. Belief plays a central role in the narrative, specifically in the shaping of foundational identities, from the LaRue family's rigid Christianity to Estele and her faith in the old gods, to Addie, whose belief in a fantasy shapes the physical representation of Luc, to Henry, whose loss of belief leaves him feeling adrift. How does Estele's immersion in the spirit world compare to Henry's studious theology?
9. How do Addie's and Henry's deals with Luc complete each other (the freedom of eternal youth paired with perpetual impermanence; constant acceptance paired with the obliteration of the true self)? If you could receive one of their "curses" for just twenty-four hours, which would you choose? Have you ever been pushed so far to the brink that you might have made a deal with Luc?
10. As the chapters unfold from the seventeenth century to modern times, and as the novel oscillates between rural life and spectacular cities, what timeless, universal aspects of human nature emerge? From warfare to popular culture, revolution to liberation, how much progress does Addie witness? To what degree does she also watch history repeat itself?
11. As the intention behind Bea's project was revealed, what did you discover about the power of art to preserve hidden truths? In what way is Addie's identity written in the stars?
12. How did you react to the novel's ending? What had you been predicting for Addie?

Guide written by Amy Root Clements