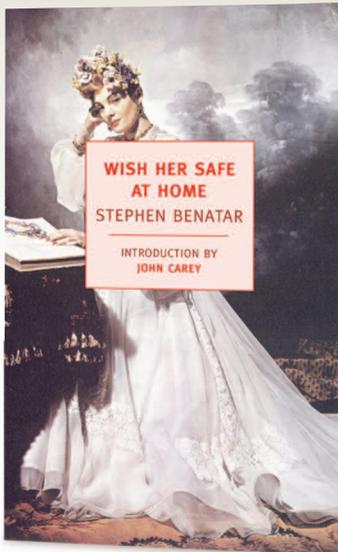


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The Random House Library Book Club



Suggested titles and
sample discussion questions
for the Book Clubs in your Library
from Random House, Inc.



Stephen Benatar

Wish Her Safe at Home

978-1-59017-335-0 | \$15.95/\$19.95C
New York Review Books | TR | January

READERS' ADVISORY:

For fans of unreliable narrators or tales of high society and all its absurdities. Fans of "Grey Gardens" will appreciate this one.

ABOUT THE BOOK:

It's Rachel's dream come true. Her aunt has left her an inheritance—an old mansion into which she moves without delay or hesitation. She soon leaves behind her administrative job and her mousy wardrobe for a life of glamour and leisure. She plants a garden, takes up writing, and impresses everyone she meets with her extraordinary optimism. But as we watch Rachel singing and joking away her days, we begin to wonder if she might be taking her transformation just a bit too far... In the words of *The Times Literary Supplement*, Rachel is "Scarlett O'Hara, Blanche DuBois, Snow White, and Miss Havisham all rolled into one."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Rachel Waring is a complicated character, and she is clearly an unreliable narrator. How would the story be different if told in the third-person, rather than the first-person style the author uses?
2. Throughout the novel Rachel compares herself to Vivien Leigh and tells people that she has "always depended on the kindness of strangers." What is the purpose of these allusions to "A Streetcar Named Desire" and in what ways is Rachel like Blanche DuBois?
3. Rachel seems to believe she is getting younger and more beautiful as time goes on, yet she claims to be very proud of her charm and intellect. Which set of attributes do you think is more important to her? Does this change as the novel goes on?
4. Why does the young couple that Rachel befriends miss the warning signs of Rachel's mental and emotional condition? Are they duped by her? Or are they not as innocent as they seem and hoping to take advantage of her?
5. What, in the end, is the significance of the novel's title?

For more discussion questions, please visit www.nybooks.com/nyrb/rgg

Roger Benimoff with Eve Conant
Faith Under Fire:
An Army Chaplain's Memoir

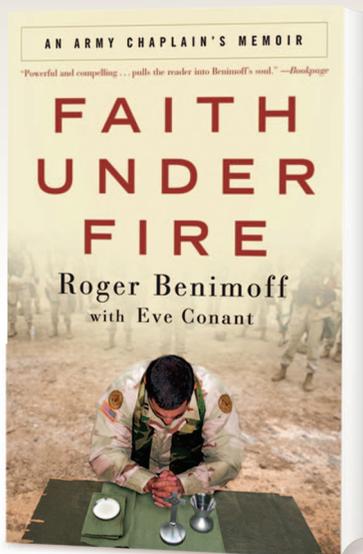
978-0-307-40882-2 | \$14.00/\$17.99C | Three Rivers Press | TR | March

978-0-307-40881-5 | \$23.95/\$27.95C | Crown | HC

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READERS' ADVISORY:

For readers interested in soldiers' personal experiences of war and their homecomings detailed in books such as *Grace Under Fire*, *The Long Road Home*, and *One Bullet Away*. Also for those looking for spiritual memoirs like *Leaving the Saints* and *Here If You Need Me*.



ABOUT THE BOOK:

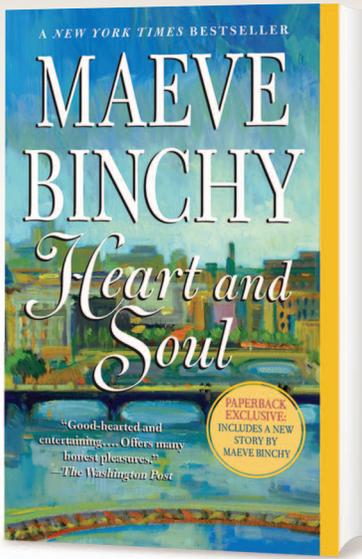
A moving chronicle of an army chaplain's spiritual journey through war, homecoming, Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, and the process to believe again. Drawing on heart-wrenching excerpts from his journal, as well as his wife's, *Faith Under Fire* follows Benimoff from Iraq back home, where he slowly faces the reality that's been held in his diary all along, reconciles his doubt with his faith, and finds God in his heart once again.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What do you think are some of the reasons that compel people to travel to war zones when they go by choice (not drafted into service)? Have you ever been drawn to a dangerous situation out of choice? If so, why?
2. What did Roger do to spiritually prepare for his second combat deployment to Iraq? What are some ways you prepare, either psychologically or spiritually, for a difficult time?
3. How does a person care for him or herself? What activities have worked for you? What techniques did Roger use during deployment? Do you think they were helpful?
4. Rebekah's and Roger's relationship was extremely strained when he returned home, more than when he was in Iraq. What brought the couple back together?
5. Can you think of a time when you and a loved one faced a crisis? How did you react similarly; how did you respond differently?

For more discussion questions, please visit

www.randomhouse.com/crown/reading-group-guides/index.pperl



Maeve Binchy

Heart and Soul

978-0-307-27842-5 | \$7.99/NCR | Anchor | MM | February

978-0-307-26579-1 | \$26.95/NCR | Knopf | HC



READERS' ADVISORY:

A study in human nature. Consider moving on to the series of Alexander McCall Smith.

ABOUT THE BOOK:

Filled with the warmth, humor, and compassion that characterize her work, Maeve Binchy tells a story of family, friends, patients, and staff who are part of a heart clinic in a community caught between the old and the new Ireland. Readers will meet old friends and new, from beloved characters such as Signora and Aidan who met in *Evening Class*; Maud and Simon, those quirky twins from *Scarlet Feather* and *Quentins*; Vonnie, who has lived a life alone on that Greek Isle in *Night of Rain and Stars*; and of course young Father Brian, who struggled with his beliefs in *Whitethorn Woods*.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

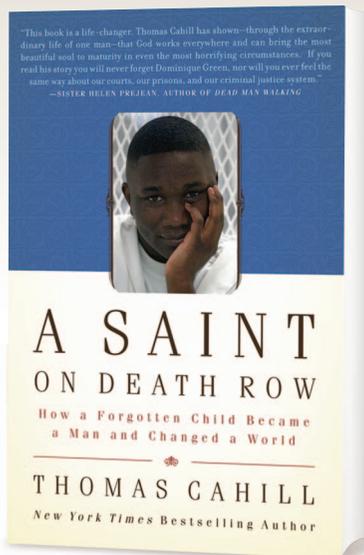
1. It's clear what the "heart" of the title refers to, but who—or what—is the soul?
2. It is very difficult to make decisions about your parents when they are older. Was Hilary right to try to keep her mother at home with her?
3. Several of the women have had relationships with abusive and entirely untrustworthy men. How does their prior history affect their current romances?
4. Twice in the novel characters state, "We always regret what we don't do, rarely what we do do." Who follows this code to the greatest advantage? Is there anyone who should apply it but doesn't?
5. Who is the most contented character in the novel? The most disappointed? What role does money play in their happiness?

For more discussion questions, please visit <http://reading-group-center.knopfdoubleday.com>

Thomas Cahill
**A Saint on
Death Row:**
How a Forgotten Child
Became a Man and
Changed a World

978-0-7679-2646-1 | \$14.00/\$17.99C | Anchor | TR | March
978-0-385-52019-5 | \$18.95/\$22.00 | Nan A Talese | HC

READERS' ADVISORY:
For fans of *A Lesson Before Dying*.



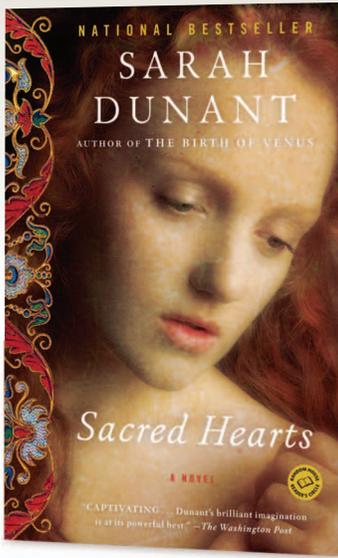
ABOUT THE BOOK:

Dominique Green lived a hard life filled with petty crime and at 18 was arrested after a Houston man was shot during a robbery. He always insisted that he did not pull the trigger, but was convicted anyway. Although four were arrested, he was the only one sentenced to death. In the twelve years he spent on death row, he emerged as a proponent of forgiveness and reconciliation, peace and enlightenment. Defenders included the murder victim's widow and children and Dominique's hero, Archbishop Desmond Tutu. This book represents a call to ensure that Dominique did not die in vain.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Dominique bore the emotional and physical scars of his mother's abuse and was estranged at times from his father, yet displayed extraordinary parenting skills, giving powerful guidance to his brothers and fellow inmates. Cahill asks, "How did Dominique...evolve into the extensive human being he became if all his early experiences were negative?"
2. If you had served on Dominique's jury, how would you have reacted to the case presented by the prosecutor?
3. Discuss the book's title. Who were the saints and the sinners along Dominique's road to execution?
4. How did you react to the anthology produced by Dominique and his fellow inmates? What insights did you gain from their voices?
5. Did *A Saint on Death Row* change your beliefs about the nature of suffering in the world, and the nature of joy and love, good and evil? If so, how?

For more discussion questions, please visit <http://reading-group-center.knopfdoubleday.com>



Sarah Dunant

Sacred Hearts:

A Novel

978-0-8129-7405-8 | \$15.00/NCR | RH Trade Paperbacks | TR | April

978-1-4000-6382-6 | \$25.00/NCR | Random House | HC



READERS' ADVISORY:

For fans of her previous novels, *The Birth of Venus* and *In the Company of the Courtesan*, as well as readers interested in renaissance Italy, especially exploring what it would have been like to live as a woman during this seismic cultural revolution.

ABOUT THE BOOK:

The year is 1570, and in the convent of Santa Caterina, in the Italian city of Ferrara, noblewomen find space to pursue their lives under God's protection. But any community, however smoothly run, suffers tremors when it takes in someone by force. And the arrival of Santa Caterina's new novice sets in motion a chain of events that will shake the convent to its core.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Imagine you were Serafina's father. What would influence your decision to send your daughter to a convent? Do you think he was being cruel or practical?
2. Do you see the sisters of Santa Caterina as prisoners confined within the convent walls or, given the harsh reality of life outside for women, do you believe they in fact enjoyed more freedom and creativity than women on the outside? If you were a woman living then and could choose to live inside or out, which choice would you make?
3. Why do you think Dunant chose to set her story entirely within the convent's walls? How would the novel have been different had she written more about the world outside them?
4. With *Sacred Hearts*, Dunant completes what she's called her Renaissance trilogy, which includes her two previous novels, *The Birth of Venus* and *In the Company of the Courtesan*. As a trilogy, they paint the possible lives of ordinary women in the Renaissance. Why do you think the author set out to do this?
5. The relationship between Suora Zuana and Serafina is an interesting and complex one. What is it about Serafina that attracts Zuana's attentions and affection? And what is it about Zuana that appeals to Serafina?

For more discussion questions, please visit www.randomhouse.com/rhpg/rc

Elizabeth Edwards
Resilience:
Reflections on the
Burdens and Gifts of
Facing Life's Adversities

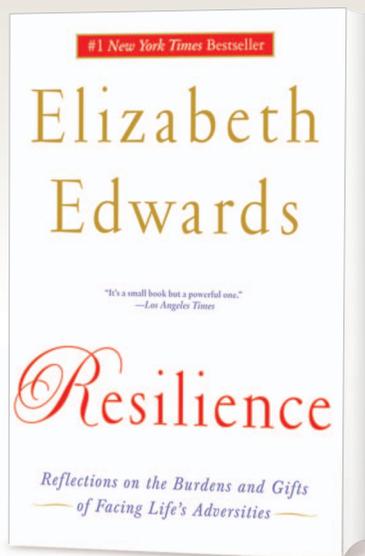
978-0-7679-3156-4 | \$12.99/\$14.99C | Broadway | TR | April

978-0-7679-3136-6 | \$22.95/\$26.95C | Broadway | HC



READERS' ADVISORY:

For the many fans of Elizabeth Edwards and readers of *Saving Graces* or *Just Who Will You Be?*



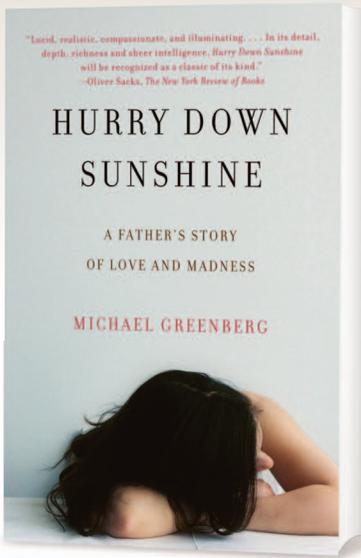
ABOUT THE BOOK:

One of the most admired women in the country, Elizabeth Edwards crafts an un sentimental and ultimately inspirational meditation on the gifts we can find among life's biggest challenges. She is no stranger to hard times and many know of the strength she has shown through it all. The loss of her son, Wade, her breast cancer diagnosis, her husband's political campaigns, and the very private matter of his infidelity have all tested her resilience. Here, she provides solace that no one is alone and offers hope that we can all rise above the adversity.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Elizabeth Edwards begins by recalling the day she was told her father was brain-dead and would never walk again. To what do you attribute his recovery? Throughout her life, what did he teach her about resilience?
2. Elizabeth is a lifelong lover of literature and has included many meaningful quotations throughout the book. Which ones made you pause, or even earmark? Which literary works have comforted you throughout your life?
3. Elizabeth uses the metaphor of a blackboard to describe life and identity, recalling that after Wade's death she felt as if her "blackboard" had been erased entirely. How does this metaphor apply to your life story? Which people, roles, and events are part of it right now? What has been erased over the years?
4. How did Elizabeth handle the transition from being a maternal caregiver to being a patient who needed care?
5. *Resilience* concludes with a reference to cancer survivor Mark Gorman's fortune cookie, which read, "You cannot change the wind, but you can adjust the sails." What adjustments are described throughout this book? What does it take to become the kind of person who always finds a way to adjust?

For more discussion questions, please visit www.elizabethedwardsbook.com



Michael Greenberg
**Hurry Down
Sunshine:**
A Father's Story of
Love and Madness

978-0-307-47354-7 | \$14.95/NCR | Vintage | TR



READERS' ADVISORY:
For fans of *Girl, Interrupted*.

ABOUT THE BOOK:

Written with exceptional power and feeling, this memoir recounts in vivid detail the summer when, at the age of fifteen, Michael Greenberg's daughter was struck mad. It is a tale of a family broken open, then painstakingly, movingly stitched together again. Unsentimental, nuanced, and deeply humane, an essential reading in the literature of affliction.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why does the author doubt Sally's psychosis? How does each family member deal with the crisis differently, and what do their reactions tell you about them?
2. Throughout the story, the author interjects scenes that reflect current events happening in the world. How does Greenberg use these events to give the reader a better understanding of what he is going through?
3. When Greenberg takes a dose of Sally's medication to try and see the world as she does, the reader also gets a glimpse of that world. What is your reaction? Does it change Greenberg's perception of her illness?
4. How is the narrator's relationship with his brother, Steven, both a responsibility he enjoys as well as well as a source of burden for him?
5. In the midst of a crisis, families either pull together or are torn apart. How did Sally's illness change the dynamics between family members?

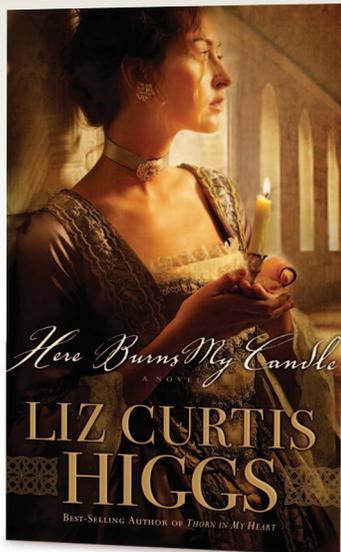
For more discussion questions, please visit <http://reading-group-center.knopfdoubleday.com>

Liz Curtis Higgs
**Here Burns
My Candle:**
A Novel

978-1-4000-7001-5 | \$14.99/\$18.99C | WaterBrook Press | TR | April



READERS' ADVISORY:
For readers of the rich historical fiction of
Philippa Gregory and Francine Rivers,
with romance-infused faith.



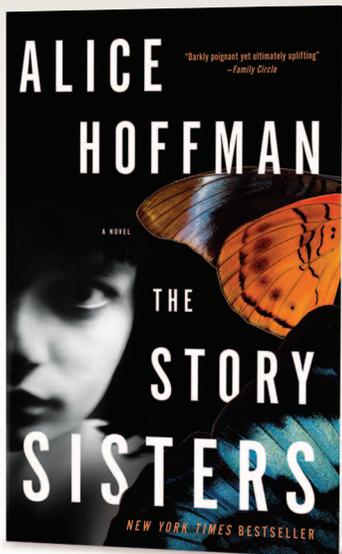
ABOUT THE BOOK:

Lady Elisabeth Kerr is a keeper of secrets and desperate to conceal a generations-old scandal that taints her family's name. One by one, the Kerr family secrets begin to surface, even as bonny Prince Charlie and his rebel army ride into Edinburgh, intent on capturing the crown. A timeless story of love and betrayal, loss and redemption, it illuminates the dark side of human nature, even as hope, the brightest of tapers, lights the way home.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. History plays a major role in *Here Burns My Candle*. Not only Scottish history, but also ancient history steps onto the stage since our two main characters, Marjory and Elisabeth Kerr, are drawn from the biblical story of Naomi and Ruth. What are the benefits of taking a fictionalized look at a well-known story?
2. Faithfulness and forgiveness are two themes interwoven throughout the story. In what ways are Marjory, Elisabeth, and Donald faithful? And unfaithful? In what ways do these characters' struggles with faithfulness and forgiveness reflect our desire to connect with others on a more meaningful level?
3. The epigraphs that open each chapter are meant to capture the heart of the action to come. Choose an epigraph you especially like from the novel. Why does it appeal to you, and how does the quote match the chapter it introduces?
4. Marjory calls Elisabeth "a keeper of secrets." In truth, all the major characters in this story have something to hide. When Donald confesses his litany of sins on paper, how does that affect the lives of those around him? In life, as in fiction, how might keeping secrets cause more harm than sharing the truth with those we love and trust?
5. When Elisabeth chooses which direction her future will take, do you think she is running away from something or toward something, and why? Does Elisabeth fit the definition of a true heroine: a woman who loves sacrificially? Her newfound faith will surely be tested in the sequel, *Mine Is the Night*. What indications do you have about how Elisabeth might respond to future trials and tribulations?

For more discussion questions, please visit www.LizCurtisHiggs.com



Alice Hoffman

The Story Sisters:

A Novel

978-0-307-40596-8 | \$15.00/\$17.50C | TR | Three Rivers Press | June

978-0-307-39386-9 | \$25.00/\$28.95C | HC | Shaye Areheart



READERS' ADVISORY:

For fans of Alice Hoffman's bestselling *The Third Angel*, Susan Isaac's domestic dramas, and the novels of Jodi Picoult.

ABOUT THE BOOK:

From the critically acclaimed author of the bestselling *The Third Angel* comes a storytelling masterpiece, the devastating and remarkable tale of three sisters who are lost and found, betrayed and rescued. At once a coming-of-age tale, a family saga, and a love story, this novel sifts through the miraculous and the mundane as the girls become women and their choices haunt them, change them, and finally redeem them.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. When Elv and Claire set out to rescue the horse at the beginning of the novel, what do you learn about the family dynamics and the personalities of the three sisters? How do they relate to one another and to their mother, Annie?
2. The importance of storytelling is a central theme of this novel. What purpose do stories serve—for the individual and for society? Do you see any parallels between the Story sisters and other literary sisters, such as the Bronte sisters or the March sisters in *Little Women*?
3. Fairy tales typically include common mythic elements, including the battle between good and evil, the idea of “the quest,” and the notion that sacrifices must be made in order for an individual to earn wisdom and faith. How are the qualities of fairy tales incorporated into the novel?
4. First at the Westfield School and later in prison, Elv strongly identifies with Hester Prynne in Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*. What parallels do you see between Elv and Hester? In what ways does Elv imagine herself to be “marked” and set apart from others? Have you known people who have made a youthful mistake that has haunted them?
5. Why does Elv keep her abduction a secret? Whom is she trying to protect? Why does Claire go along with her decision? Is keeping another person's secret a sign of loyalty or does it—as Meg asserts—make you an accomplice? How did your vision of Elv change as you learned more details about her abduction?

For more discussion questions, please visit www.alicehoffman.com

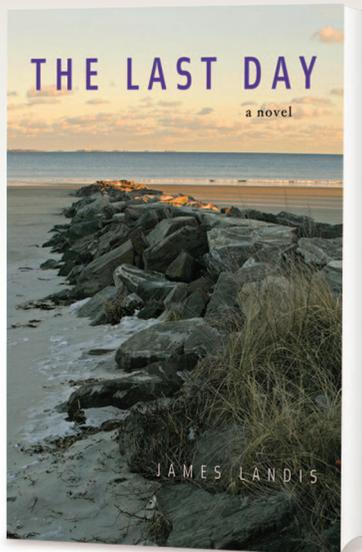
James Landis
The Last Day:
A Novel

978-1-58642-165-6 | \$14.99/\$18.99C | Steerforth | TR



READERS' ADVISORY:

For readers of Christian and religious fiction like *The Shack* or the works of Jane Kirkpatrick.



ABOUT THE BOOK:

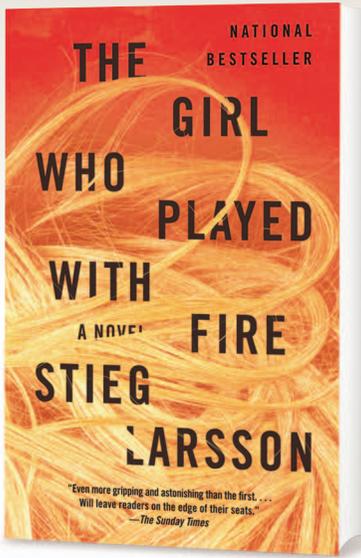
This is the poetic and spellbinding tale of young U.S. Army sniper Warren Harlan Pease and his return to his native New Hampshire from the Iraq war. Just one day after his homecoming, he meets a mysteriously wise man, mid-thirties or so, who seems to have emerged from the light of the morning...

"It's tough to do a guy-meets-Jesus book and not be too pious for some and/or too heretical for others. [James] Landis walks a line somewhere between in this ambitious and lyrical story. . . [THE LAST DAY] is worth a dozen *Shacks*." — *Publishers Weekly* (starred review)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What did you think when Warren first meets Ray and is sure he's meeting Jesus? What made him believe Ray was Jesus? Do you?
2. Ray/Jesus tells Warren, "We all have two birthdays." What are those birthdays? How do they differ? What are their meanings in our lives?
3. What could make Wesley Pease so suspicious and untrusting of books? What does he mean when he says, "Don't go into any house that has more books than guns. You could get badly hurt"? And, "an empty bookcase holds more wisdom than all the libraries in the world"?
4. Discuss Warren's feelings about Mr. Smith. If Warren's father had been a different sort of person, would Warren have felt the same way about Mr. Smith?
5. Are you surprised to learn that Jesus appears in the Koran? What role does that holy book play in this novel and in the life of Warren?

For more discussion questions, please visit <http://thelastdaybook.com/reading-group-guide>



Stieg Larsson

The Girl Who Played With Fire

978-0-307-45455-3 | \$15.95/NCR | Vintage | TR | March

978-0-307-47615-9 | \$7.99/NCR | Vintage | MM | March



READERS' ADVISORY:

For fans of the burgeoning array of thrillers set in Scandinavia.

ABOUT THE BOOK:

Lisbeth Salander, the troubled, genius hacker of *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, finds herself at the center of a double murder investigation of two reporters working on an exposé of sex trafficking for Mikael Blomkvist's *Millennium*. Her dark past surfaces with a vengeance and she must deal with it in order to save her life.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Have you read *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo*? How did your knowledge—or lack of knowledge—about that novel affect your reading of this one?
2. Revenge is a major theme of the novel. Who seeks it, and what are the results?
3. Why Does Blomkvist give Salander the benefit of the doubt, when so many others don't?
4. Blomkvist calls Salander "the woman who hated men who hate women." Is this an accurate assessment? How did she end up this way? How does it affect her behavior?
5. If Stieg Larsson were still alive, what one question would you most like to ask him?

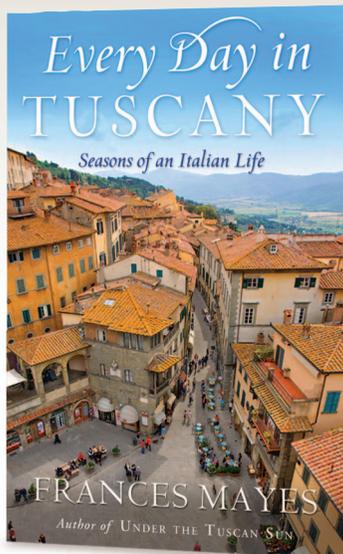
For more discussion questions, please visit <http://reading-group-center.knopfdoubleday.com>

Frances Mayes
**Every Day
in Tuscany:**
Seasons of an Italian Life

978-0-7679-2982-0 | \$25.00/\$29.95C | Broadway | HC | March



READERS' ADVISORY:
For readers with an appetite for Italy and who dream of living in a foreign land, they'll love the adventures of a woman who has made the leap across the Atlantic.



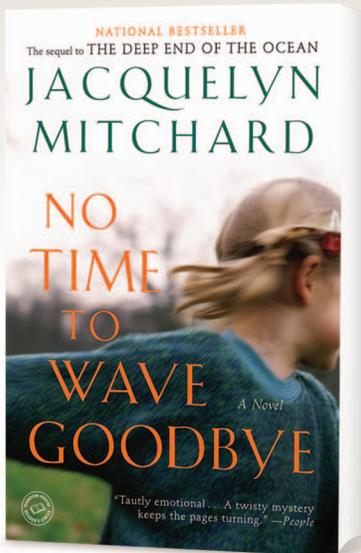
ABOUT THE BOOK:

In this direct sequel to *Under the Tuscan Sun* and *Bella Tuscany*, Mayes lyrically chronicles her continuing two decades-long love affair with Tuscany, its people, culture, and lifestyle, with favorite recipes, and the delights and challenges of living in Italy day-to-day.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Frances Mayes explores the process of “taking” a decision (rather than making one) and being taken by decisions as well. Italy, she writes, took hold of her and shaped her in its image. How has she been transformed by her second home over the past two decades? What impact has she made on the community of Cortona? What decisions have “taken” you in your own life?
2. From cold spring rains to the lavish scent of lemon trees at their peak, Mayes describes a community that is constantly aware of nature. Discuss the seasonal aspects of life in Tuscany. Is your life in tune with the seasons? What can we gain by listening to the natural world?
3. Mayes describes the economic factors she encounters in decisions large and small, and in the lives of those throughout Cortona. How does she measure “costs” (financial and emotional) as she and Ed prepare for the next chapter of their lives? How is security measured and defined in a world that is not driven by materialism?
4. What universal truths did Mayes learn from Willie Bell? What aspects of a southern childhood does Mayes carry with her, no matter where she lives? What aspects of your childhood are forever part of your own identity?
5. Renewal and moving forward are primary quests in this book. What tactics and solitary pursuits described here might you adopt?

For more discussion questions, please visit www.francismayesbooks.com



Jacquelyn Mitchard

No Time to Wave Goodbye:

A Novel

978-0-8129-7957-2 | \$15.00/\$17.50C | RH Trade Paperbacks | TR | May
978-1-4000-6774-9 | \$25.00/\$29.95C | Random House | HC



READERS' ADVISORY:

With its action-packed storyline, mystery whodunit, and poignant exploration of family binds, this novel will draw previous Mitchard fans as well as a new generation of readers, especially of child-bearing age: women in their 20s-40s.

ABOUT THE BOOK:

It has been twenty-two years since Beth Cappadora's three-year-old son, Ben, was abducted. By some miracle, he returned nine years later, and the family began to pick up the pieces of their lives. Now the Cappadora children are grown, and middle child Vincent has created a documentary, "No Time to Wave Goodbye," which focuses on five families caught in the tortuous web of never knowing the fate of their abducted children. The film earns tremendous acclaim, but just as the family is about to celebrate the culmination of Vincent's artistic success, what Beth fears the most occurs, and the Cappadoras are cast back into the past, revisiting the worst moment of their lives—with only hours to find the truth that can save a life. The sequel to *The Deep End of the Ocean*.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What do you know about Beth Cappadora and her eldest son from the first three paragraphs of the novel?
2. Is Ben/Sam Cappadora really the "good boy" everyone believes he is—why or why not?
3. How does Beth react to the crime and what qualities does her reaction show? What about Candy Bliss?
4. If every story incorporates a sea change, describe how the Cappadoras are different after their "return" from the wilderness than they were before?
5. What does Beth Cappadora say or do that makes us care about her? That makes us angry with her?

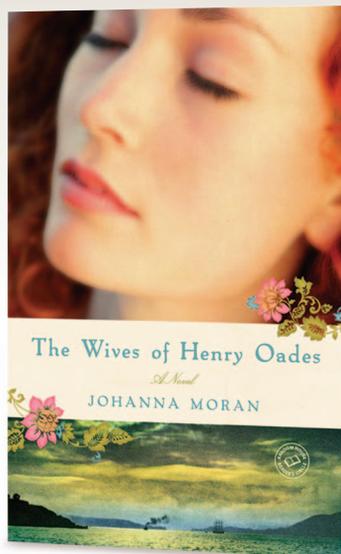
For more discussion questions, please visit www.randomhouse.com/rhpg/rc

Johanna Moran
**The Wives of
Henry Oades:**
A Novel

978-0-345-51095-2 | \$15.00/\$18.95C | Ballantine | TR | February



READERS' ADVISORY:
For fans of historical fiction and
far-reaching family epics—*The 19th Wife*
meets *Lay That Trumpet in Our Hands*.



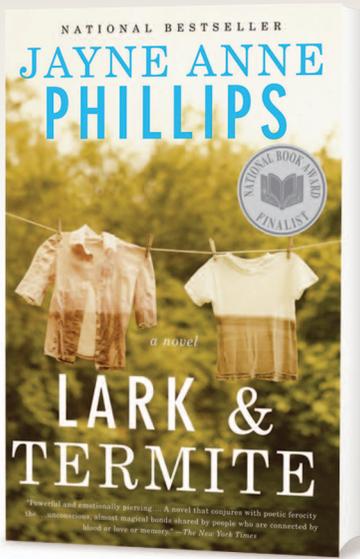
ABOUT THE BOOK:

A sweeping debut novel based on a widely publicized but little-known story. In the late 1800s, Henry Oades emigrates with his wife and children to New Zealand. One night while he's away from home, his family is kidnapped by native Maoris and presumed dead. Grief-stricken, Henry accepts a job opportunity in California, where, several years later, he remarries...only for his first wife and children to show up soon after, alive and having finally escaped from captivity. Johanna Moran's powerful novel explores the intricacies of marriage, the construction of family, themes of guilt, grief, and the courage of two remarkable women in a page-turning drama.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. On the voyage to New Zealand, Mrs. Randolph, a fellow passenger, cares for Margaret as she miscarries. Later, when Margaret tries to explain her grief over her new friend's death to Henry, she thinks, "the small transactions between women, particularly mothers, cannot adequately be explained to a man. Some, like hers with Mrs. Randolph, will bind women for life." Do you agree with Margaret? Can a strong relationship between women be forged in a matter of hours? With whom have you felt this connection?
2. Why do you think Mr. Oades misidentified Mim Bell as his wife? How could he have made such a grievous error?
3. Henry finally accepts that his loved ones are dead, and eventually he marries another woman. What is the catalyst for this turning point? Do you agree with his actions?
4. Why do Margaret and the children receive such a chilly welcome when they finally return to the village from the Maori camp?
5. Though it's a wretched situation for everyone involved, which Mrs. Oades do you think suffers most? With which woman do you most identify?

For more discussion questions, please visit www.randomhouse.com/rhpg/rc



Jayne Anne Phillips

Lark and Termite:

A Novel

978-0-375-70193-1 | \$14.95/\$18.95C | Vintage | TR | January

978-0-375-40195-4 | \$24.00/\$28.00 | Knopf | HC



READERS' ADVISORY:

Told, like *The Sound and the Fury*, from multiple points of view and for fans of *Black Tickets*, *Machine Dreams*, and *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*.

ABOUT THE BOOK:

A gripping story of a West Virginia family in the '50s. Lark, a teenage girl, spends her days caring for her brother, Termite, a child unable to walk and talk, but filled with gifts of sight and feeling. Their mother is absent, their aunt Nonie is raising them as their father is caught up in the Korean War. The echoing ramifications of war, family secrets, dreams and ghosts, and the love that unites us all make this a remarkable read.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Mothers, and substitute mothers, play a substantial role in the novel. What do you think Jayne Anne Phillips is trying to say about motherhood?
2. Discuss the sense of sound as it relates to each of the main characters. In what ways does sound function differently for Termite than for Nonie or Lark? What does the sense of sound say about the importance of language?
3. "Termite can only tell the truth," Lark Says. Who else tells the truth? Who lies? What are the ramifications?
4. Throughout the novel, we revisit events from different perspectives. How do the multiple takes change your understanding of what's happening?
5. Does the novel have a happy ending?

For more discussion questions, please visit <http://reading-group-center.knopfdoubleday.com>

Warren St. John

Outcasts United:

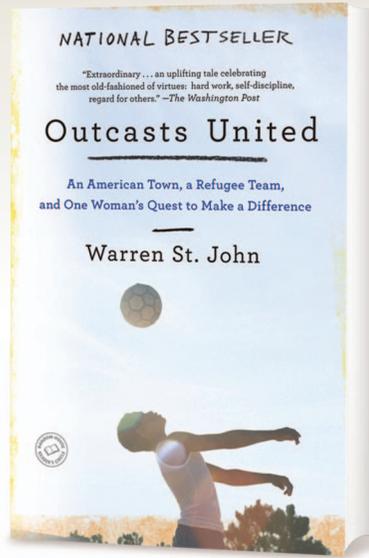
An American Town, a Refugee Team, and One Woman's Quest to Make a Difference

978-0-385-52204-5 | \$15.00/\$18.95C | Spiegel & Grau | TR
978-0-385-52203-8 | \$24.95/\$27.95C | Spiegel & Grau | HC



READERS' ADVISORY:

This is both a classic, inspiring tale of triumphant underdogs and a deeper look at some of the most urgent topics in American life. Perfect for readers of books like *Three Cups of Tea*, *Mountains Beyond Mountains* and *Seabiscuit*.



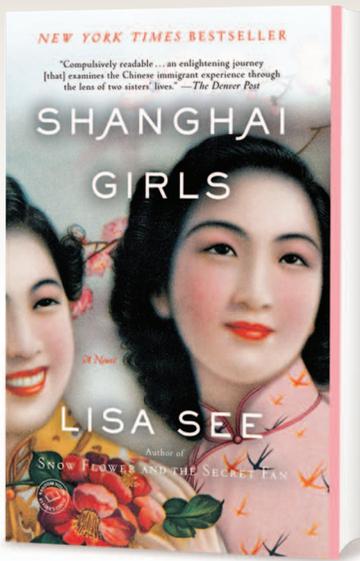
ABOUT THE BOOK:

Clarkston, Georgia, was a typical southern town that in the 1990s became a refugee resettlement center and the home of scores of families in flight from the world's war zones. It also became the home to Luma Mufleh, an American-educated woman from Jordan who created a youth soccer program for Clarkston's refugee children. They named themselves the Fugees. This is the complex and inspiring story of a small town in confrontation with rapid change, the resilience and hope of a refugee community, and the power of a single person to change the lives of many.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. When played beautifully, as Coach Luma might say, soccer is one of the world's most fluid and graceful games. How does the nature of soccer reflect and influence the ways in which the refugee children respond to the challenges of life in Clarkston? Is there something about the game that might make it particularly compelling for children who have endured war, violence, and displacement?
2. Coach Luma is also a Clarkston "outsider" in terms of her nationality. In what ways does her experience as an immigrant compare with those of her players? How does her "outsider" status affect the bond between the coach and her team?
3. How has the history of migration altered the cultural landscape in your community?
4. How does Mandela Ziaty's struggle with issues of identity differ from that of many American-born teenagers? Are there more similarities than differences? How does his dual identity as a defacto American and a displaced Liberian complicate this struggle?
5. Discuss the problems involved in the Fugees' search for a home field. Did the Clarkston government violate their human rights? What about the situation of the Lost Boys and the use of the soccer field?

For more discussion questions, please visit www.randomhouse.com/rhpg/rc



Lisa See

Shanghai Girls:

A Novel

978-0-8129-8053-0 | \$15.00/\$18.95C

RH Trade Paperbacks | TR | February

978-1-4000-6711-4 | \$25.00/\$28.95C | Random House | HC



READERS' ADVISORY:

This story of sisters with a complicated and sometimes troubled relationship is great for women who love evocative historical fiction like the author's previous bestsellers, *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan* and *Peony in Love*.

ABOUT THE BOOK:

In 1937 Shanghai—the Paris of Asia—twenty-one-year-old Pearl Chin and her younger sister, May, are having the time of their lives. Both are beautiful, modern, and carefree—until the day their father tells them that he has gambled away their wealth. To repay his debts, he must sell the girls as wives to suitors who have traveled from Los Angeles to find Chinese brides. As Japanese bombs fall on their beloved city, Pearl and May set out on the journey of a lifetime, from the Chinese countryside to the shores of America. Though inseparable best friends, the sisters also harbor petty jealousies and rivalries. Along the way they make terrible sacrifices, face impossible choices, and confront a devastating, life-changing secret, but through it all the two heroines of this astounding new novel hold fast to who they are—Shanghai girls.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Each sister believes that her parents loved the other sister more. Who is right about this? Why?
2. Z.G. talks about *ai kuo*, the love for your country, and *ai jen*, the emotion you feel for the person you love. How do these ideas play out in the novel?
3. *Shanghai Girls* makes a powerful statement about the mistreatment of Chinese immigrants to the United States. Were you surprised about any of the details related to this theme in the novel?
4. How would you describe the relationship between Pearl and May? How does the fact that both are, in a sense, Joy's mother affect their relationship toward each other? Who loves Joy more and how does she show it?
5. There are times when it seems like outside forces conspire against Pearl—leaving China, working in the restaurant, not looking for a job after the war, and taking care of Vern. How much of what happens to Pearl is a product of her own decisions and choices?

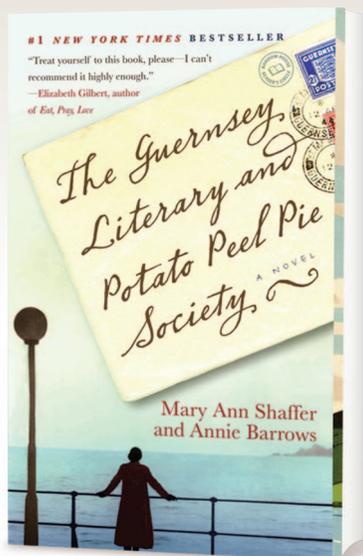
For more discussion questions please visit www.lisasee.com

Mary Ann Shaffer
and Annie Barrows

The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society

978-0-385-34100-4 | \$14.00/\$16.50C | Dial Press | TR

READERS' ADVISORY:
Set during World War II, with depictions
of everyday courage, friendship, ingenuity,
and love, this is a great match for readers
of *84, Charing Cross Road*.



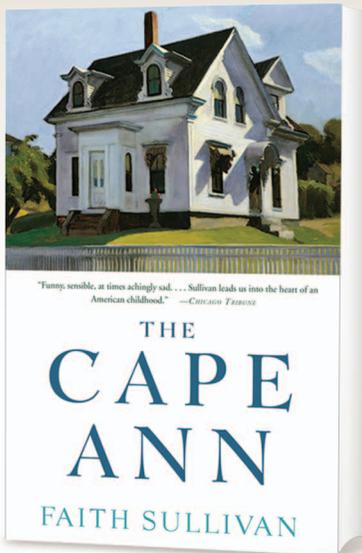
ABOUT THE BOOK:

January, 1946: London is emerging from the shadow of the Second World War, and writer Juliet Ashton is looking for her next book subject. Who could imagine that she would find it in a letter from a man she's never met, a native of the island of Guernsey. As Juliet and her new correspondent exchange letters, Juliet is drawn into the world of this man and his friends. The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society—a book club born as a spur-of-the-moment alibi when its members were discovered breaking curfew by the Germans occupying their island—boasts an outstanding cast of characters, from pig farmers to phrenologists, literature lovers all. Juliet knows she has found the subject of her book, and possibly much more, and sets sail for Guernsey, changing the course of her life forever.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What was it like to read a novel composed entirely of letters? What do letters offer that no other form of writing (not even emails) can convey?
2. Discuss the poets, novelists, biographers, and other writers who capture the hearts of the members of the Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society. What does a reader's taste in books say about his or her personality? Whose lives were changed the most by membership in the society?
3. In what ways were Juliet and Elizabeth kindred spirits? What did Elizabeth's spontaneous invention of the society, as well as her brave final act, say about her approach to life?
4. Numerous Guernsey residents give Juliet access to their private memories of the occupation. Which voices were most memorable for you? What was the effect of reading a variety of responses to a shared tragedy?
5. Which of the members of the Society is your favorite? Whose literary opinions are most like your own?

For more discussion questions please visit www.GuernseyLiterary.com



Faith Sullivan

The Cape Ann:

A Novel

978-0-307-71695-8 | \$15.00/\$18.95C

Three Rivers Press | TR | February



READERS' ADVISORY:

The bestselling classic most often compared with *To Kill a Mockingbird* is back with new content and an updated package, with the reading group guide written by the author!

ABOUT THE BOOK:

A gorgeous coming-of-age story set during the Depression and told through the eyes of a six-year-old girl whose one dream is to move with her family from the one-room space at the train depot and into a real home.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why on earth would a woman like Arlene marry a man like Willy? By the same token, why would a man like Willy marry a woman like Arlene? Were either of them typical of their era?
2. In what ways does the author illustrate the severity of the Great Depression? How do economic factors affect the story?
3. What do you think of Uncle Stanley? Is his weakness villainous? On what evidence do you base your feelings?
4. The stork brings babies. What are the arguments for and against a parent telling a child such an outright lie?
5. Has Lark's relationship with her mother changed by the end of the book?

For more discussion questions please visit

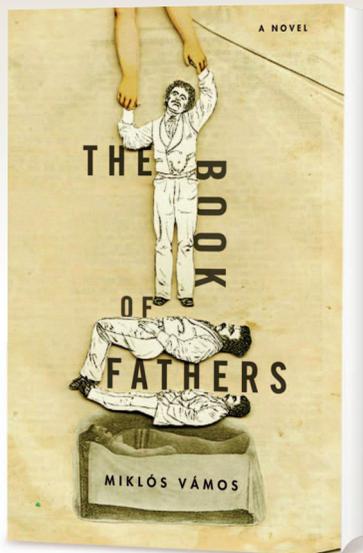
www.randomhouse.com/crown/reading-group-guides/index.pperl

Miklos Vámos;
Translated by Peter Sherwood
**The Book
of Fathers**

978-1-59051-339-2 | \$15.95/NCR | Other Press | TR



READERS' ADVISORY:
For lovers of ambitious fiction and
family sagas with a magical twist. Readers
of *100 Years of Solitude* and *Everything is
Illuminated* may enjoy this one.



ABOUT THE BOOK:

An epic, literary saga through the magical adventures of twelve generations of fathers over a span of three hundred years in Hungarian history.

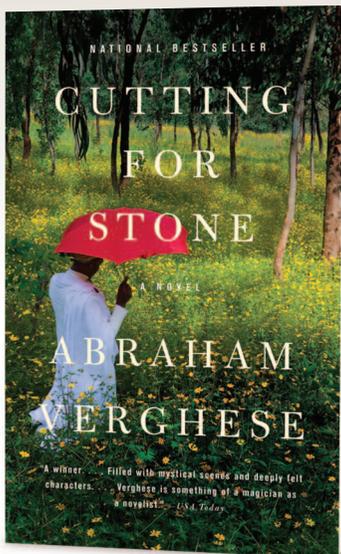
“Widely read in his homeland but rarely translated into English, Vámos should win a new American audience with his beautifully crafted novel of connection and continuity.”

—*Kirkus Reviews*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. This book closely examines ethnic identity and the ways in which we classify ourselves and create a self-identity based on our heritage. Think about the descriptors you use to quantify your own identity. How do Jews (or Christians, Hindus, Muslims, etc.) know they are Jews? And what does it mean to you when you lay claim to a specific nationality based on your ancestry? In what ways do you celebrate your heritage?
2. As a result of the Holocaust, the author Miklos Vámos had no knowledge or access to information about the history of his family. Discuss how *The Book of Fathers*, despite being a work of fiction, serves as an imagined memoir. What is the value of this to Vámos?
3. When Kornell finds the family's gold pocket watch, it becomes a totem for the long line of Csillag men. Discuss the significance of the fact that their family touchstone comes in the form of a timepiece. What items are cherished within your own family or have been passed down from generation to generation? What meaning do these items hold for you?
4. The Csillag men are clairvoyant, able to glimpse both the past and the future. Were you able to suspend disbelief and go with this construct? Why or why not? Discuss other writers who have employed magical realism in their work. How does Vámos's work compare?
5. Women play a fairly insignificant role in *The Book of Fathers*. What are your feelings about this? In thinking about your own family, what role do the men play in defining who you are and the way in which your family views its place in the world?

For more discussion questions, please visit www.otherpress.com/readersguides



Abraham Verghese

Cutting for Stone:

A Novel

978-0-375-71436-8 | \$15.95/NCR | Vintage | TR | January

978-0-307-35778-6 | \$22.00 | Vintage Canada | TR



READERS' ADVISORY:

With the international scope of *The Kite Runner* and the narrative power of *The Thorn Birds*. For readers of *A Bend in the River*, *Of Human Bondage*, and *The Poisonwood Bible*.

ABOUT THE BOOK:

An epic novel of twin brothers linked through love, love of the same woman, and a passion for medicine. Marion and Shiva are born in Addis Ababa's Missing (Mission) Hospital, the result of a union between a beautiful Indian nun and a brash British surgeon. Their mother dies in childbirth and their father vanishes. Years pass and a second betrayal sends Marion to a hospital in the Bronx—where the past catches up to him with a vengeance. The story of one man's growing up in a far-away country in turmoil and his journey to America.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Abraham Verghese has said that his ambition was to "tell a great story, an old-fashioned, truth-telling story." In what ways is this an old-fashioned story—and what does it share with the great novels of the nineteenth century? What essential human truths does it convey?
2. Marion suffers a series of painful betrayals—by his father, by Shiva, and by Genet. To what degree is he able, by the end of the novel, to forgive them?
3. In what important ways does Marion come to resemble his father although he grows up without him? How does Marion grow and change over the course of the novel?
4. A passionate, unique love affair sets this novel in motion, and yet this romance remains a mystery—even to the key players—until the very conclusion. How does the relationship between sister Mary Joseph Praise and Thomas Stone affect the lives of Shiva and Marion and everyone else at Missing? What do you think Verghese is trying to say about the nature of love and loss?
5. Almost all of the characters are living in some sort of exile, self-imposed or forced, from their home country. Verghese is of Indian descent but was born and raised in Ethiopia, went to medical school in India, and has lived and worked in the U.S. for many years. What does this novel say about exile and the immigrant experience? How does exile change these characters, and what do they find themselves missing the most about home?

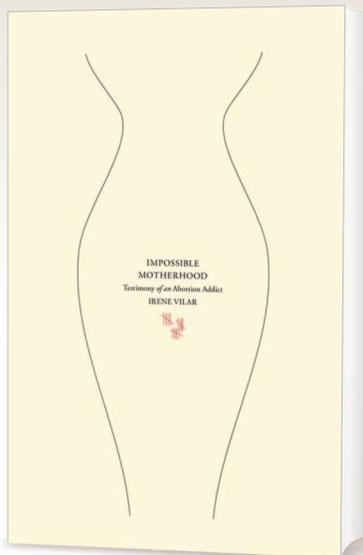
For more discussion questions, please visit <http://reading-group-center.knopfdoubleday.com>

Irene Vilar
**Impossible
Motherhood:**
Testimony of an
Abortion Addict

978-1-59051-320-0 | \$15.95/\$19.95C | Other Press | TR



READERS' ADVISORY:
If your patrons love to discuss
controversial memoirs, this one is perfect.
Also a great book for women's issues.



ABOUT THE BOOK:

Fifteen abortions in fifteen years seems almost unfathomable. But this is what Irene Vilar has gone through. Fully aware that she will be maligned and misunderstood, she's written a courageous and extraordinary memoir about her intimate journey through family trauma and self-mutilation and her determined battle to prevail into motherhood.

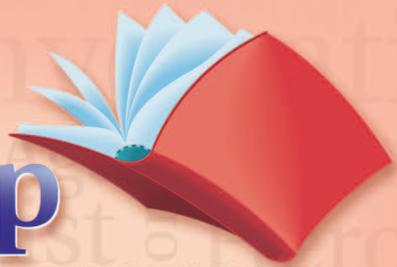
"In *Impossible Motherhood*, Vilar does exactly what the best memoirists do: She tells us the truth about everything, even when the truth utterly confounds....[Vilar] tells [her story] to us with courage and grace and a true writer's skill." —*The Oregonian*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Vilar, a pro-choice feminist, was hesitant to write this book for fear that it would be misunderstood or compromise a woman's right to choose. Why do you think she eventually changed her mind? Do you think her initial fears might be realized?
2. During the eleven years the author was married to her first husband, what changes did Irene go through? How was he able to exert so much control over her early in their relationship? Was she eventually able to break free? Could you relate to any part of their relationship?
3. What characteristics do you feel Vilar has inherited from her family members (especially her parents and grandmother)? Does she embrace or reject these qualities? Why?
4. Do you agree that Vilar was addicted to abortion as is stated in the subtitle? If not, what was it that she was really addicted to? How does she ultimately break her addiction?
5. What were your first impressions upon hearing the title or premise of *Impossible Motherhood*? Did those impressions change after reading it? With abortion being such a polarizing issue, were you expecting the author to have a political platform? Did you feel one present within her story?

For more discussion questions, please visit www.otherpress.com/readersguides

Book Group Resources



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