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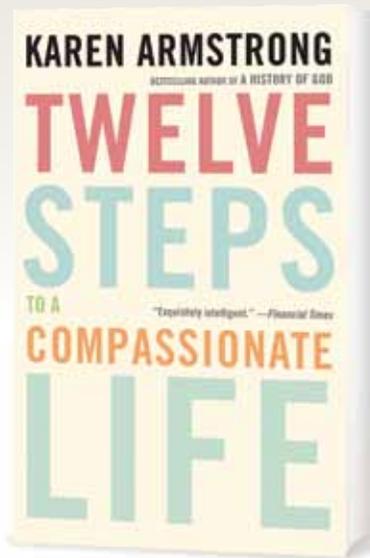


BOOK CLUB

What Will You Read Next?



Suggested titles and sample discussion questions
for the **Book Clubs @ your Library**



Karen Armstrong

Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life

978-0-307-74288-9 | \$14.00 | Anchor | TR | 978-0-307-40067-3
AD: 978-0-307-88175-5 | CD: 978-0-307-88176-2

READERS' ADVISORY

For discussion groups seeking to have significant and meaningful interaction on interfaith issues. "Rich with wisdom and provocative ideas that stimulate deeper thinking – and encourage individuals to identify a particular contribution to the global effort."

—*Christian Science Monitor*

ABOUT THE BOOK

The author sets out a program that can lead us toward a more compassionate life, beginning with "Learn About Compassion," and closing with "Love Your Enemies." In working through the Charter for Compassion she suggests concrete ways of putting compassion into action in our daily lives—she provides practical and actionable ideas that can indeed transform our world.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Compassion is central to the three monotheistic religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. What stories or myths in your cultural, religious, family, or other traditions emphasize compassion?
2. How can you make your family a school for compassion, where children learn the value of treating all others with respect?
3. Ask if anyone in your group who has practiced mindfulness techniques or who meditates would be willing to share how these practices have affected their life.
4. How often are you aware of or do you act on the positive or negative version of the Golden Rule? How might you incorporate it more consciously in your life?
5. Armstrong points to the words and deeds of some of the world's great moral leaders in describing the difficult practice of loving our enemies. Have you been able to get past feelings of hurt, fear, or hatred to humanize an "enemy"?

For more discussion questions visit charterforcompassion.org
Content provided courtesy of the Charter for Compassion.

Elizabeth Berg

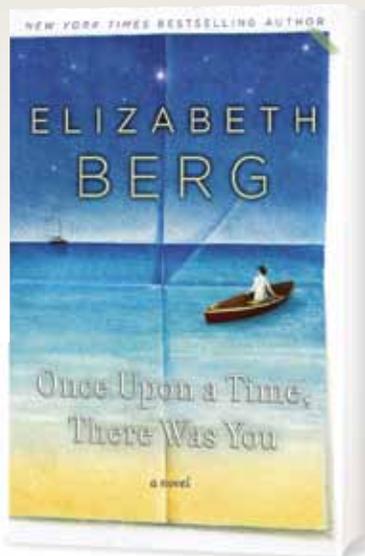
Once Upon a Time, There Was You: A Novel

978-0-345-51732-6 | \$15.00/\$17.00C | Ballantine | TR
📞 978-1-58836-893-5 | 📻 AD 978-0-307-71381-0
📻 CD 978-0-307-71380-0

READER'S ADVISORY:

For readers of smart women's fiction and family dramas. "Hard to put down . . . This addictive read shows anew what a wonderful writing talent Berg is: strong characters illuminate a tender story about what makes marriage work, and how family binds itself together despite things that pull it apart."

—*Library Journal*



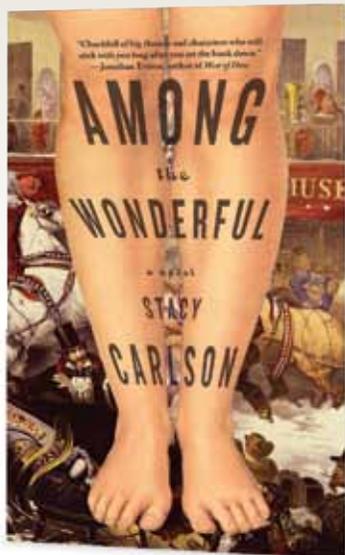
ABOUT THE BOOK:

Even on their wedding day, John and Irene sensed that they were about to make a mistake. Years later, divorced, dating other people, and living in different parts of the country, they seem to have nothing in common—nothing except the most important person in each of their lives: Sadie, their spirited daughter. Feeling smothered by Irene and distanced from John, Sadie is growing more and more attached to her new boyfriend, Ron. When tragedy strikes, Irene and John come together to support the daughter they love so dearly. What takes longer is to remember how they really feel about each other.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Throughout the novel, Irene and John make several references to the fact that their parents' problematic relationships have affected their own views of marriage. How have your own past experiences affected your thoughts on what makes a successful marriage?
2. Irene's mother's death, and how her father handled this tragedy, have clearly impacted her. What impact did this event have on Irene's relationship with her daughter?
3. John describes the end of his marriage with Irene as "an old story." What does he mean by this? Can you pinpoint the factors that led to Irene and John's divorce?
4. How do you feel about Sadie's monumental decision? Do you share Irene's concerns about how she is moving forward in her life?
5. The novel is rife with secrets, kept by almost all of the characters. How do secrets affect this family and their loved ones? Why do you suppose the author has chosen to make the power of secrecy so prominent a theme?

For more discussion questions visit www.randomhousereaderscircle.com



Stacy Carlson
Among the Wonderful

978-1-58642-184-7 | \$24.99/\$27.99C | Steerforth Press | HC
📞 978-1-58642-187-8

READERS' ADVISORY

For readers of *The Autobiography of Mrs. Tom Thumb* and *Water for Elephants*.

ABOUT THE BOOK:

In the autumn of 1840, PT Barnum purchased an outdated museum on the corner of Broadway and Ann Street in Manhattan. He was a newcomer to the city and still unknown to the world, but with uncanny confidence and impeccable timing he transformed the dusty natural history collection into a great ark for public imagination. *Among the Wonderful* is a fictional account of this museum's short, extraordinary reign as America's most popular attraction. What is the value of a life's work when its paradigm is overtaken by a new age? In different ways, Emile Guillaudeu and Ana Swift, the book's two heroes, both struggle with this question. The narrative moves beneath the museum's baffling surface to visit the lives of all of Barnum's Representatives of the Wonderful; soon their relationships and conflicts transform the museum into a vibrant, sometimes violent, community.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

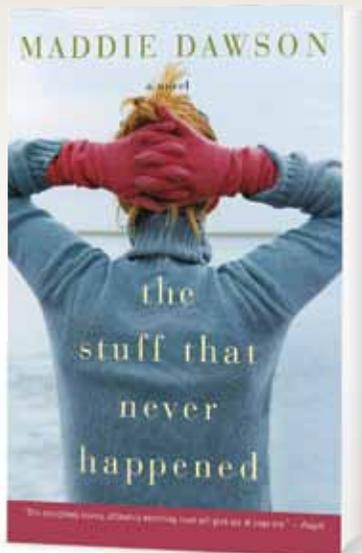
1. In many ways, Ana Swift and Emile Guillaudeu are very different characters. But what are some preoccupations or themes that they share?
2. How would you describe Ana Swift at the beginning of the novel? What does she hope will be different for her now that she works at Barnum's Museum? As she settles into a routine there, does her outlook change? How?
3. Over the course of the book, what changes in Guillaudeu's character surprised you?
4. Guillaudeu goes on a journey into the still undeveloped regions of upper Manhattan. Discuss this journey's importance to the plot overall. How successfully did the author portray this landscape?

For more discussion questions visit www.amongthewonderful.com

Maddie Dawson
**The Stuff That
Never Happened:**
A Novel

978-0-307-39368-5 | \$14.00/\$16.00C | Broadway | TR
978-0-307-59235-4

READERS' ADVISORY:
*Like *Time of My Life* and *The Myth of You and Me*, this novel lands squarely in the sweet spot of sophisticated, successful commercial women's fiction. The complex and emotionally charged issues at the heart of this novel will appeal to groups who enjoy Elizabeth Berg, Marian Keyes, and Jane Green.*



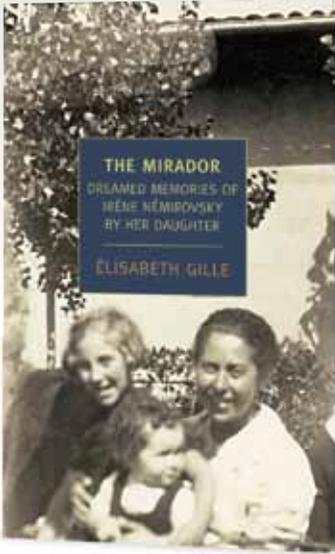
ABOUT THE BOOK:

Grant and Annabelle McKay have had a long, stable marriage, complete with two grown children, thousands of dinners at their scarred oak table, and fond sex. But Annabelle is in love with another man. Twenty-six years ago, in the first chaotic days of her marriage to Grant, Annabelle met Jeremiah. She's clung to that passionate affair ever since, though she and Grant have sworn never to speak of it. When she's called to New York City to help care for her pregnant daughter, Annabelle runs into Jeremiah and must finally decide which man truly possesses her heart—and whether she can pledge herself to either one of them for the rest of her life.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Annabelle readily agrees to Grant's terms for reuniting, making a pact that they will never speak of her affair or those unhappy years again, and that this new reunion will mark the true beginning of their marriage. Should she have had misgivings about this from the start? Would such a pact be possible for most people? Why does it seem to suit Grant?
2. This book is as much about mother-daughter relationships as about marriages. Annabelle's mother, Edie, confides too much in her daughter and makes her uncomfortable. Annabelle keeps secrets from Sophie and doesn't tell her about her problems with Grant. How does Sophie see her parents' marriage? Does her idealization of their marriage make her have unrealistic expectations about her own? How frank should mothers be in talking with their daughters about their own mistakes?
3. Did Annabelle come to the right decision at the end of the book? What changes can she make to create the life she wants?

For more discussion questions visit <http://www.randomhouse.com/crown/readers-guides>



Elisabeth Gille, Translated by
Marina Harss

The Mirador:

Dreamed Memories of Irène Némirovsky by her Daughter

978-1-59017-444-9 | \$14.95/\$16.95C | New York Review Books | TR
📞 978-1-59017-465-4

READERS' ADVISORY

The Mirador is a haunted and a haunting book, an unflinching reckoning with the tragic past, and a triumph not only of the imagination but of love. For fans of *All Other Worldly Goods*.

ABOUT THE BOOK:

A NYRB Classics Original. This is a new translation, never before published in English. A book for everyone who loved *Suite Française* and wants to know more. Gille was the youngest daughter of Irène Némirovsky. She was only five years old when Némirovsky died in Auschwitz. Gille became a well-known French publisher, and chronicled her wartime experiences in her own novel, *Shadows of a Childhood*. *The Mirador* is Gille's "dreamed biography" of her mother. As fully and deeply imagined as Irène Némirovsky's novels, Gille's "mémoires rêvées" will also prove indispensable to devotees of the nearly forgotten author for the fascinating new light it sheds on her life and work. Élisabeth Gille was only five when the Gestapo arrested her mother, and she grew up remembering next to nothing of her. Her mother was a figure, a name, Irène Némirovsky, a once popular novelist, a Russian émigré from an immensely rich family, a Jew who didn't consider herself one and who even contributed to collaborationist periodicals, and a woman who died in Auschwitz because she was a Jew. To her daughter she was a tragic enigma and a stranger.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. The French word "mirador" literally means a watchtower. Having read the book, what significance do you think this title takes on?
2. Gille begins her mother's story with the birth of her daughter; she imagines Némirovsky thinking of her own mother during this time, making a single, small maternal gesture [p.12]. Why does Gille start the story this way?
3. How would you characterize Irène as a child? Did you find her to be a believable child? Why or why not? What about a likeable one?

For more discussion questions visit
<http://assets.nybooks.com/media/doc/2011/09/13/mirador-rgg.pdf>

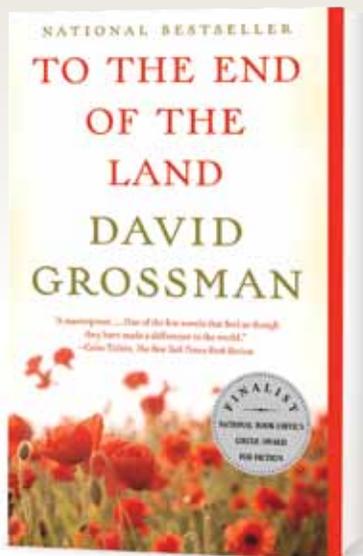
David Grossman
**To the End
of the Land**

978-0-307-47640-1 | \$15.95 | Vintage | TR | 978-0-307-59434-1
AD: 978-0-307-87575-4 | CD: 978-0-307-87574-7

READERS' ADVISORY:

Readers seeking strong female characters need look no further. "Powerful.... Foremost among Grossman's achievements is the creation of Ora, a modern-day Scheherazade and icon of the mourning mother."

—*The Seattle Times.*



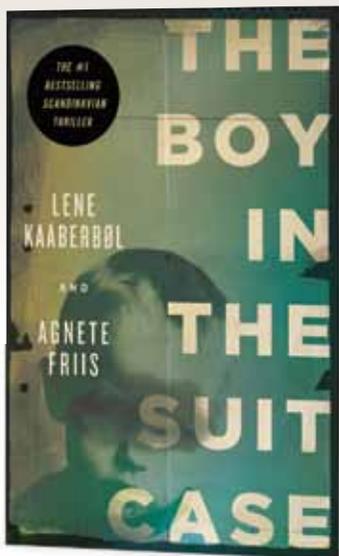
ABOUT THE BOOK:

This portrait of a family in love and crisis makes for one of the great antiwar novels of our time. Ora, an Israeli mother, is on the verge of celebrating her son Ofer's release from army service when he suddenly returns to the front. In a fit of preemptive grief and magical thinking, she sets out for a hike in the Galilee, leaving no forwarding information—she can hear no bad news. Recently estranged from her husband, she drags along with her Avram, former lover and POW, who has become a virtual hermit. Their walk has a war and peace rhythm, as they talk of the hideous trials of war next to the joy and anguish of raising children.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What one word would you use to describe the central theme of this novel? Is it a political novel?
2. Throughout the novel is the notion of tapestry, of threads being woven. What does that tapestry signify?
3. Ora says, "I'm no good at saving people." Why does she say this? Is it true?
4. Ora says to Avram, "Just remember that sometimes bad news is actually good news that you didn't understand. Remember that what might have been bad news can turn into good news over time, perhaps the best news you need." What is she hoping for here? Does her advice turn out to be accurate?
5. In the final scene of the novel, what does Avram's vision signify? Was Ora's motivation for the hike wrong, as she fears?

For more discussion questions visit www.readinggroupcenter.com



Lene Kaaberbol
and Agnete Friis

The Boy in the Suitcase

978-1-56947-981-0 | \$24.00 /\$27.00C | Soho Press| TR
📞 978-1-56947-982-7

READERS' ADVISORY

The heart-stopping first installment in the bestselling Danish Crime series starring Red Cross nurse, Nina Borg. For readers of Scandinavian crime fiction and those who are looking for more after the Millennium Trilogy.

ABOUT THE BOOK:

Nina Borg, a Red Cross nurse, wife, and mother of two, is a compulsive do-gooder who can't say no when someone asks for help—even when she knows better. When her estranged friend Karin leaves her a key to a public locker in the Copenhagen train station, Nina gets suckered into her most dangerous project yet. Inside the locker is a suitcase, and inside the suitcase is a three-year-old boy: naked and drugged, but alive. Is the boy a victim of child trafficking? Can he be turned over to authorities, or will they only return him to whoever sold him? When Karin is discovered brutally murdered, Nina realizes that her life and the boy's are in jeopardy, too. In an increasingly desperate trek across Denmark, Nina tries to figure out who the boy is, where he belongs, and who exactly is trying to hunt him down.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Although *The Boy in the Suitcase* is often describes as a mystery, a thriller, and/or a crime novel, at the heart of the book are the family dramas of fairly ordinary people. Did you find yourself relating to the characters' situations or motivations?
2. Nina at one point claims that most of the criminals who prey on the illegal immigrants are stupid. It is probably safe to say that there are no evil geniuses in this book. But are there evil morons? To what extent is the concept of evil applicable? And does it have anything at all to do with intelligence?
3. How is Danish society portrayed in the novel? Does it differ from your experience of your society, and if so, how?
4. Is *The Boy in the Suitcase* a very Scandinavian book, or do you feel like it could have taken place anywhere?

For more discussion questions visit www.readinggroupguides.com

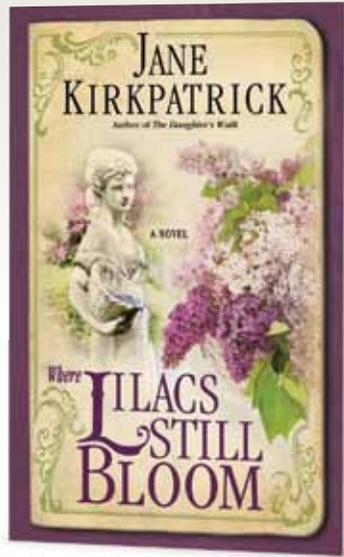
Jane Kirkpatrick

Where Lilacs Still Bloom: A Novel

978-1-4000-7430-3 | \$14.99/\$16.99C | Waterbrook Press | TR
📞 978-0-307-72942-2 | 📻 AD: 978-0-449-00891-1
📀 CD: 978-0-449-00890-4

READERS' ADVISORY:

“Kirkpatrick is a master at using fiction to illuminate history’s truths. This beautiful and compelling work of historical fiction deserves the widest possible audience.”
—*Publishers’ Weekly* about *The Daughter’s Walk*



ABOUT THE BOOK:

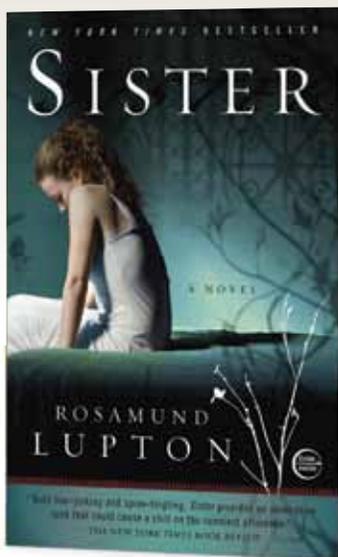
Award-winning author Jane Kirkpatrick brings readers another riveting fictional account of a real pioneer housewife whose love for flowers changed the lives of those around her. In the early 1900s, housewife Hulda Klager reads a book that changes her life forever, leading her to develop over 200 new varieties of lilacs that she gives away or sells to individuals as a way of sharing beauty. Her commitment to creation—struggling against flooding rivers and the vagaries of hybrid plants—while living through family losses and challenges is a story of perseverance and generosity that culminates when, in a time of great need, the people who Hulda gifted with beauty return to her life to help her start over.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What was Hulda Klager’s first love? Family? Flowers? Faith? The challenges of cross-breeding? Hulda’s father urges her to be faithful to her gift. Did Hulda have a gift or a calling or were her interests and abilities merely passions that she pursued?
2. What do you think about Hulda’s father’s comment: “Some would say—and Frank might be one—that meddling with nature isn’t wise especially from a mother who should be content with looking after her family.” Was her father right? Was Hulda “meddling” with creation? Should a mother be content with raising her family?
3. Suffering and its consequences and causes was a theme in this book. How did Hulda come to terms with the losses her family endured? Do you think that suffering can be a consequence of pursuing a dream? What role did Hulda’s garden play in helping her deal with life’s trials?
4. Did Hulda pay a price for her passion? Would she say that the price was worth it? Do you think it was? Why or why not?

Jane often participates in book groups through speaker phone conversations. To have Jane “visit” your book group, contact her at <http://www.JKBooks.com/contact> and indicate the desired day and time to see if Jane’s schedule permits joining you.

For more discussion questions visit <http://waterbrookmultnomah.com/category/discussion-guides>



Rosamund Lupton

Sister: A Novel

978-0-307-71652-1 | \$14.00/\$16.00C | Broadway | TR
978-0-307-71653-8

READERS' ADVISORY:

A dark, gothic, and page-turning narrative with love and tension between sisters, tragic loss, ethical questions, and an incredible twist, *Sister* is perfect discussion fodder for reading groups and fans of Jodi Piccolt.

ABOUT THE BOOK:

Beatrice's little sister Tess has been found dead, apparently by suicide. Bee's friends, her fiancé, and even her mother accept the fact that impulsive artist Tess killed herself. However, only Bee knows that Tess was pregnant with her first child, and she is convinced that something more sinister is responsible for her sister's untimely death. Single-minded in her search for a killer, Bee moves into Tess's apartment and throws herself headlong into her sister's life—and all its secrets. Her family and the police see her as a grieving sister in denial, unwilling to accept the facts of the case. But as a determined Bee gives her statement to the lead investigator, her story reveals a predator who got away with murder—and an obsession that may cost Bee her own life.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How does Bee and Tess's relationship compare to the way you and your siblings interact? What causes the most disagreement between you? What brings you together, no matter what?
2. What does the novel say about resilience, both physical and emotional, and where it comes from?
3. In their email exchanges, Bee and Tess argue about what is safe and what is reckless. Which sister's temperament is closest to your own? What is your definition of a life worth living?
4. Dr. Nichols, Professor Rosen, and William all inhabit the world of diagnosis and treatment. How do their three different roles (and mindsets) reflect the realities of modern medicine?

For more discussion questions visit <http://www.randomhouse.com/crown/readers-guides>

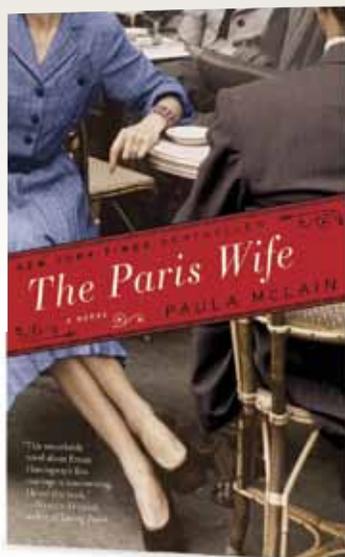
Paula McClain

The Paris Wife

978-0-345-52130-9 | \$25.00 | Ballantine | HC
978-0-385-66922-1 | \$29.95C | Bond Street Books | HC
📍 | 978-0-345-52132-3 | 📖 AD: 978-0-307-87721-5
📍 CD: 978-0-307-87720-8

READER'S ADVISORY:

This stunningly evocative, beautifully rendered story told in the voice of Ernest Hemingway's first wife, Hadley, has the same power and historical richness of *Loving Frank*.



ABOUT THE BOOK:

No twentieth-century American writer has captured the collective imagination as much as Ernest Hemingway. In this novel, told in the voice of his first wife, Hadley, Paris of the Lost Generation and characters such as F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald, Gertrude Stein, Ezra Pound, and Gerald and Sara Murphy provide the vivid background to this engrossing, emotionally wrenching story of love and betrayal.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. In many ways, Hadley's girlhood in St. Louis was a difficult and repressive experience. How do her early years prepare her to meet and fall in love with Ernest? What does life with Ernest offer her that she hasn't encountered before? What are the risks?
2. Hadley and Ernest don't get a lot of encouragement from their friends and family when they decided to marry. What seems to draw the two together? What are some of the strengths of their initial attraction and partnership? The challenges?
3. The Ernest Hemingway we meet in *The Paris Wife*—through Hadley's eyes—is in many ways different from the ways we imagine him when faced with the largeness of his later persona. What do you see as his character strengths? Can you see what Hadley saw in him?
4. The Hemingways spontaneously opt for Paris over Rome when they get key advice from Sherwood Anderson. What was life like for them when they first arrived? How did Hadley's initial feelings about Paris differ from Ernest's and why?
5. *The Sun Also Rises* is drawn from the Hemingways' real-life experiences with bullfighting in Spain. Ernest and his friends are clearly present in the book, but Hadley is not. Why? In what ways do you think Hadley is instrumental to the book regardless, and to Ernest's career in general?

For more discussion questions and recipes for your *The Paris Wife* Book Club meeting visit www.thepariswife.com



Moni Mohsin

Duty Free: A Novel

978-0-307-88924-9 | \$13.00 | Broadway | TR

📞 978-0-307-88925-6

READERS' ADVISORY:

Think Emma Woodhouse meets Becky Bloomwood in modern-day Lahore, and you have the makings of this funny, smart, sassy novel from Pakistani novelist Moni Mohsin.

ABOUT THE BOOK:

Our plucky heroine has just been tapped to help find a suitable wife for her cousin Jonkers. Jonkers, who at thirty-seven dresses and acts more like an awkward teenager than a self-assured, successful business owner, has been terribly unlucky in love. He tends to fall for women who are of the wrong “background.” It is no easy thing to find a woman for Jonkers while also juggling her son Kulchoo’s education, shopping, managing her maids, wheedling for British passports, and keeping up with the Joneses. Each chapter begins with that day’s headlines, which become increasingly dire as the “beardos” from the hinterlands come ever closer to Lahore and threaten everything that she holds dear.

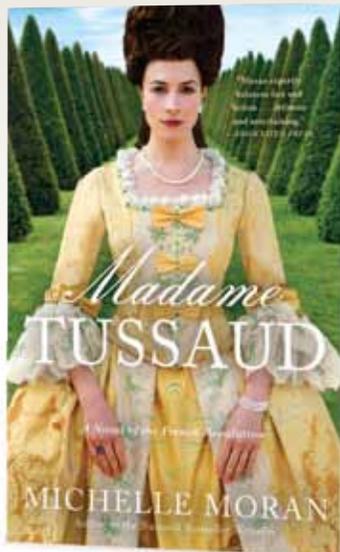
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. *Duty Free* is set in Lahore, Pakistan, a bustling urban center. At first glance, the sphere that our protagonist lives and moves in looks much like it would in any large global city, from New York to London to Dubai. How does this presentation of Lahore match your expectations? How does it differ from the city you envisioned?
2. Moni Mohsin has been called a modern day Jane Austen. How do the themes and characters in *Duty Free* mirror those in Austen’s best known works?
3. At the beginning of the novel, it appears as if the women in modern Lahore are defined by their relationships to others: by being good daughters, wives, mothers, friends. As the novel progresses, we see more and more examples of women demonstrating their own agency and economic freedom by becoming independent business owners and breadwinners for their families. Did any of these women surprise you? What are the ramifications of Sana’s success? Mulloo’s? Jamila’s?
4. Our narrator speaks in a language all her own, rife with malapropisms and misspellings. The effect is often quite funny, but there are moments when her descriptions are even more telling and accurate. What are some of your favorite examples?

For more discussion questions visit <http://www.randomhouse.com/crown/readers-guides>

Michelle Moran
Madame Tussaud:
A Novel of the French
Revolution

978-0-307-58866-1 | \$15.00/\$17.00C | Broadway | TR
978-0-307-58867-8



READERS' ADVISORY:

For fans of historical fiction featuring strong female protagonists from authors like Philippa Gregory and Karleen Koen. Huge YA crossover appeal!

ABOUT THE BOOK:

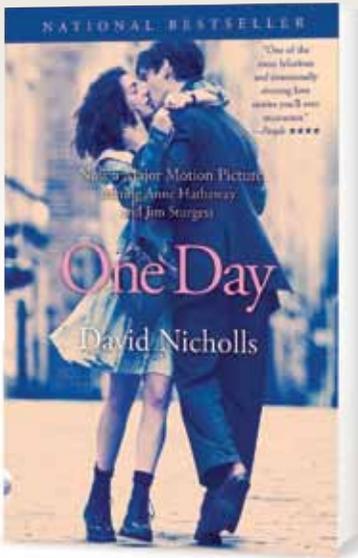
Library Journal Best Historical Fiction 2011

The year is 1788, and a revolution is about to begin. In her fourth novel, national bestselling author Michelle Moran enters the gilded but troubled court of Marie Antoinette with the intriguing story of Marie Tussaud, a woman who survived the French Revolution only by creating death masks of the beheaded aristocracy. Spanning five years from budding revolution to the Reign of Terror, *Madame Tussaud* brings us into the world of an incredible heroine whose talent for wax modeling saved her life and preserved the faces of a vanished kingdom.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How do you think Marie's life differed from most other women of her time? Where would you say she placed her emphasis?
2. When Marie visited the Marquis de Sade in the Bastille, she was surprised by the conditions she found there. Were you surprised as well? If so, in what way did those conditions surpass or fall short of your expectations?
3. At one point, Marie told her neighbor, and later fiancé, Henri, she didn't agree with Rousseau's philosophy regarding the goodness of man. In what way would you say Marie's philosophy regarding people differed from Rousseau?
4. What do you think was the king's greatest virtue as a ruler? What was his greatest vice? Which characteristic of his do you think played the greatest role in his ultimately losing his throne and his life?
5. Would you describe Marie as a Royalist or a Revolutionary? Why?

For more discussion questions visit <http://www.randomhouse.com/crown/readers-guides>
Request an author chat at www.michellemoran.com!



David Nicholls

One Day

978-0-307-94671-3 | \$14.95/\$16.95C | Vintage | TR

📖 978-0-307-73930-8 | 📻 AD: 978-0-307-91290-9

📀 CD: 978-0-307-91456-9

READERS' ADVISORY

Readers will come to this perhaps having seen the film starring Anne Hathaway and Jim Sturgess. The film is faithful to the book with the screenplay having been done by the author. "An instant classic.... One of the most hilarious and emotionally riveting love stories you'll ever encounter." —*People*

ABOUT THE BOOK:

It's July 15, 1988. Emma Morley and Dexter Mayhew, casual acquaintances during university years, find themselves spending their graduation night together. These two very different people can't seem to stop thinking about one another. Over twenty years, snapshots of their relationship are revealed on July 15, with all the squabbles, hopes, missed opportunities, laughter and tears. A brilliant exploration of the interplay of character and fate.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. To what extent do Emma's thoughts and assumptions about Dexter and his about her rely on facile stereotypes? Does their initial encounter make the reader more sympathetic to one of the characters?
2. In an unsent letter Dexter writes, "I think you're scared of being happy....that you actually get a kick out of being disappointed and under-achieving, because it's easier...." How do his insights into Emma compare to her own? Is he more perceptive about her than he is about himself?
3. At the Disastrous dinner of July 15, 1995, Emma declares, "Dexter, I love you so much....and I probably always will. I just don't like you any more. I'm sorry." Does Dexter recognize why his behavior leads to this break?
4. What do Emma and Dexter at forty have in common with the people they were on graduation night? How does the author simultaneously capture the ways people change and the persistence of individual characteristics through the passage of time?
5. What demands does the unusual structure of the story make on the reader? (The yearlong gaps between chapters, the focus on mundane happenings rather than "big" events, and the alternating point of view.)

For more discussion questions visit www.readinggroupcenter.com

Michele Norris
**The Grace
of Silence:**
A Family Memoir

978-0-307-47527-5 | \$14.95/\$16.95C | Vintage | TR

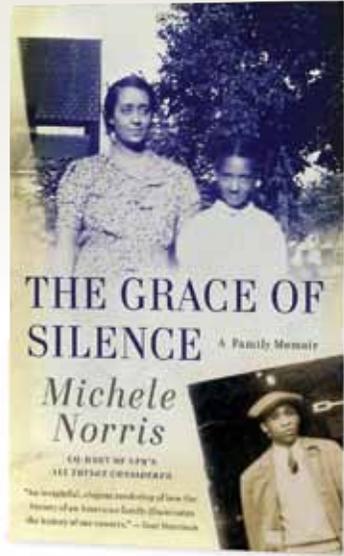
📞 978-0-307-37946-7 | 📖 AD: 978-0-307-74894-2

📻 CD: 978-0-307-74893-5

READERS' ADVISORY

“An insightful, elegant rendering of how the history of an American family illuminates the history of our country.”—Toni Morrison

Related titles exploring racial legacy: Barack Obama's *Dreams from My Father*; Firoozeh Dumas's *Funny in Farsi*; GB Tran's *Vietnamerica*; or Warren St. John's *Outcasts United*.



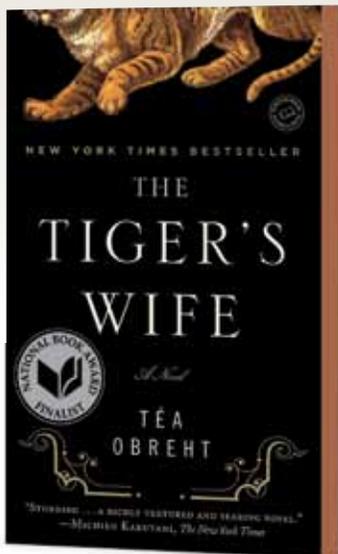
ABOUT THE BOOK:

Norris, co-host of NPR's *All Things Considered*, had planned to write about hidden conversation on race unfolding in the wake of President Obama's election; however, she soon discovered painful secrets in her own family – from her father's shooting by a Birmingham police officer to her maternal grandmother's peddling pancake mix as an itinerant Aunt Jemima in the Midwest. She takes a profound and bracing journey into her family's past and reveals the power of silence and secrets.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How did family secrets affect life in the Norris home? What does she mean when she says she was “shaped by the weight of silence”?
2. Norris's mother and uncle have different perceptions of her grandmother's work as a traveling Aunt Jemima. What does the image mean to you?
3. The Norris family were “block busters” in Minneapolis. Do you live in a community that was or still is segregated by race or class?
4. “Nowadays everything is racist. No matter what you say. You can't tell the truth without being racist. You can't say anything.” Political correctness is an enormous focus in American life. Does it leave any room for real conversations about race?
5. Norris asks, “What's been more corrosive to the dialogue on race in America over the last half century or so, things said or unsaid?”

For more discussion questions visit www.readinggroupcenter.com



Tea Obreht

The Tiger's Wife:

A Novel

978-0-385-34384-8 | \$15.00/\$17.00C | RH Trade Paperbacks | TR
📞 978-0-679-60436-5 | 📍 AD: 978-0-307-87703-1
📀 CD: 978-0-307-87702-4

READER'S ADVISORY:

For readers of literary fiction like Abraham Verghese's *Cutting for Stone* or Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*.

“Every word, every scene, every thought is blazingly alive in this many-faceted, spell-binding, and rending novel of death, succor, and remembrance.”—*Booklist* (starred review)

ABOUT THE BOOK:

NATIONAL BOOK AWARD FINALIST • Winner of The Orange Prize
New York Times 10 Best Books of 2011 • Library Journal Top Ten Books of 2011

In a Balkan country mending from war, Natalia, a young doctor, is compelled to unravel the mysterious circumstances surrounding her beloved grandfather's recent death. Searching for clues, she turns to his worn copy of *The Jungle Book* and the stories he told her of his encounters over the years with “the deathless man.” But most extraordinary of all is the story her grandfather never told her—the legend of the tiger's wife.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Natalia says that the key to her grandfather's life and death “lies between two stories: the story of the tiger's wife, and the story of the deathless man.” What power do the stories we tell about ourselves have to shape our identity and help us understand our lives?
2. Natalia believes that her grandfather's memories of the village apothecary “must have been imperishable.” What lesson do you think he might have learned from what happened to the Apothecary?
3. What significance does the tiger have to the different characters in the novel: Natalia, her grandfather, the tiger's wife, the villagers? Why do you think Natalia's grandfather's reaction to the tiger's appearance was so different than the rest of the villagers?
4. “The story of this war—dates, names, who started it, why—that belongs to everyone,” Natalia's grandfather tells her. But “those moments you keep to yourself” are more important. By eliding place names and specific events of recent Balkan history, what do you think the author is doing?

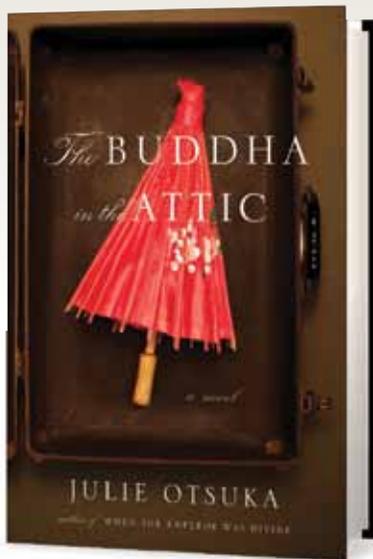
For more discussion questions visit www.randomhouse.com/rgg

Julie Otsuka
**The Buddha in
the Attic:** A Novel

978-0-307-70000-1 | \$22.00/\$25.00C | Knopf | HC
978-0-307-70046-9 | AD: 978-0-307-94076-2
CD: 978-0-307-94075-9

READERS' ADVISORY:

For all fans of Otsuka's previous classic *When the Emperor Was Divine*, "This lyrically distilled and caustically ironic story of exile, effort, and hate is entrancing, appalling, and heartbreakingly beautiful." —*Booklist*



ABOUT THE BOOK:

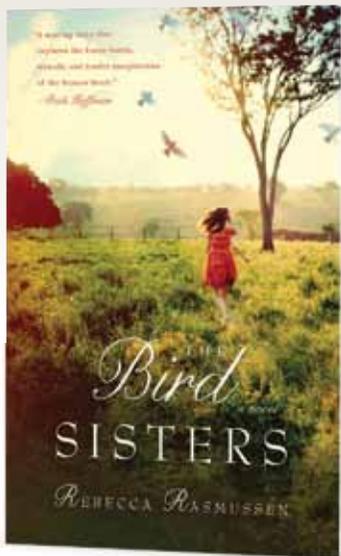
Library Journal Top Ten Books of 2011

A group of women is brought by ship from Japan to San Francisco in the early 1900s as mail-order brides. The collective narrative voices travel from the boat, with hopes for good husbands and happy futures, to the arrival (and harsh realities), to toil as migrant workers and house cleaners, to the overwhelming struggle to learn a new language and culture, giving birth and raising children who reject their parents and heritage, and finally... the arrival of war and the absolute heartbreak of the internment camps.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. The narration is in the first person plural – told from the point of view of a group rather than an individual. What is the impact of this narrative decision on the reader?
2. The last words spoken by the women's mothers still ring in their ears: "You will see: women are weak, but mothers are strong." What does this mean, and how does the novel bear this out?
3. The women's lives in the early months in America offer much for discussion. How do their experiences and challenges differ from what they expected? How are they perceived by their husbands? By their employers?
4. How do the dreams of the children differ from the dreams of their mothers?
5. Discuss the themes of guilt, shame, and forgiveness that run throughout the book.

For more discussion questions visit www.ReadingGroupCenter.com



Rebecca Rasmussen

The Bird Sisters:

A Novel

978-0-307-71797-9 | \$14.00/\$16.00C | Broadway | TR

978-0-307-71798-6

READERS' ADVISORY:

"...with its exquisitely drawn characters & lyrical prose, one of the best first novels I've read in ages."

—Nancy Pearl

"...Achingly authentic and almost completely character driven, the story of the sisters depicts the endlessly binding ties of family."

—*Publishers Weekly*

ABOUT THE BOOK:

Whenever a bird flies into a window in Spring Green, Wisconsin, sisters Milly and Twiss get a visit. Twiss listens to the birds' heartbeats, assessing what she can fix and what she can't, while Milly listens to the heartaches of the people who've brought them, offering her signature vanilla drop biscuits. The two sisters have spent their lives nursing people and birds back to health. But they weren't always known as the Bird Sisters.

In the summer of 1947, Milly was a great beauty with emerald eyes and Twiss was a brazen wild child who never did what she was told. That was the summer their golf-pro father got into an accident that cost him both his swing and his charm, and their mother finally admitted their hardscrabble lives wouldn't change. And, most unforgettably, it was the summer their cousin Bett came down from a town called Deadwater and changed the course of their lives forever.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. The Bird Sisters is set in Spring Green, a small farming community in Wisconsin. Spring Green seems to be distinct from Deadwater, Minnesota, which is where Cousin Bett has grown up. How does each location shape the story and our characters?
2. The novel is primarily set during the late 1940s, when the pace of life was a little bit slower than it is today. There seems to be a pervasive cultural nostalgia and a renaissance with regard to skills and cultural mores from the recent past. Why do you think this is?
3. Milly and Twiss love their parents deeply, but they don't know quite how to forgive them. How do you think their lives might change if they were able to forgive them?
4. Twiss and Father Rice exchange letters. In these letters, Twiss often reveals her secret feelings. Father Rice, in turn, reveals his. In the age of the Internet, have we lost the intimacy that can be found in this form of correspondence, the traditional letter?

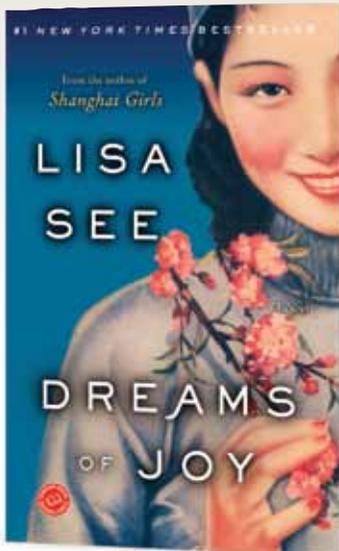
For more discussion questions visit <http://www.randomhouse.com/crown/readers-guides>

Lisa See
Dreams of Joy:
A Novel

978-0-8129-8054-7 | \$15.00/\$18.00C | RH Tradepaperbacks | TR
📞 978-0-679-60489-1 | 📻 AD: 978-0-307-87880-9
📻 CD: 978-0-307-87879-3

READER'S ADVISORY:
For fans of historical fiction,
mother-daughter stories, as well as
readers of Asian literature.

**"Riveting, meticulously
researched." —Kirkus Reviews**



ABOUT THE BOOK:

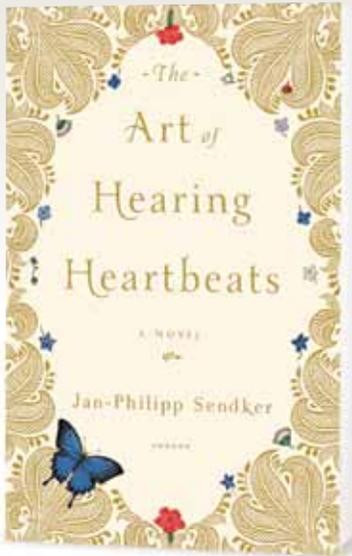
More than a sequel—literally a continuation—*Dreams of Joy* fulfills the spellbinding story begun in *Shanghai Girls*.

Devastated after discovering the shocking truth about her mother and father, Joy flees to China to find a new life (and her real father)—and Pearl, realizing what has happened, sets out for Mao's China, resolved to find her daughter. Both women face almost insurmountable struggles as they combat their guilt-ridden past and a Communist China intolerant of their free spirits, and the tension in their stories is heightened by Pearl's selfless determination to rescue Joy and bring her home.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Joy is frequently described in terms of her Tiger astrological sign. In *Dreams of Joy*, where do you see her acting true to her Tiger nature? Where do you see her acting un-Tiger like?
2. Many of us grew up believing that the People's Republic of China was "closed," and that it remained that way until President Nixon "opened" it. Certainly Pearl (and even Joy, to a great extent) go to China with preconceived ideas of what they'll see and experience. In what ways are they right—or wrong?
3. Does seeing the world through Joy's eyes help you to understand Pearl? Similarly, does Pearl give insights into her daughter?
4. The novel's title, *Dreams of Joy*, has many meanings. What does the phrase mean to the different characters in the novel, to Lisa, to the reader?
5. In many ways *Dreams of Joy* is a traditional coming-of-age novel for Joy. Lisa has said that she believes it's also a coming of age novel for Pearl and May. Do you agree? If so, how do these three characters grow up? Do they find their happy endings?

For more discussion questions visit <http://www.lisasee.com/dreamsofjoy/book-club-questions>



Jan-Philipp Sendker

The Art of Hearing Heartbeats

978-1-59051-463-4 | \$14.95/\$16.95C | Other Press ITR

978-1-59051-464-1

READERS' ADVISORY

"[*The Art of Hearing Heartbeats*] is a love story set in Burma...imbued with Eastern spirituality and fairy-tale romanticism...Fans of Nicholas Sparks and/or Elizabeth Gilbert should eat this up." —*Kirkus Reviews*

This book reads like a fable—an honest look at the power of true love.

ABOUT THE BOOK:

A poignant and inspirational love story set in Burma, *The Art of Hearing Heartbeats* spans the decades between the 1950s and the present. When a successful New York lawyer suddenly disappears without a trace, neither his wife nor his daughter Julia has any idea where he might be...until they find a love letter he wrote many years ago, to a Burmese woman they have never heard of. Intent on solving the mystery and coming to terms with her father's past, Julia decides to travel to the village where the woman lived. There she uncovers a tale of unimaginable hardship, resilience, and passion that will reaffirm the reader's belief in the power of love to move mountains.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. In your opinion, what does the back-and-forth between Julia's and U Ba's narratives add to the telling of the love story between Tin Win and Mi Mi?
2. Tin Win's parents abandon him as a child but Mi Mi is born into a close-knit family. Mi Mi's mother, especially, adores her daughter. Do you see this developmental difference reflected in the adult each one becomes, or in the way the two relate to one another?
3. After he loses his sight, Tin Win spends several years in a monastery under the tutelage of the abbot, U May. In your opinion, what does U May model for Tin Win? How does Tin Win grow in these years?
4. A portion of the novel is in the form of letters. Does this change the mood or the flow of the novel? The way you see the characters?
5. Tin Win and Mi Mi develop an intense, literally symbiotic relationship: he walks for her; she acts as his eyes. They become inseparable, but then they are separated for decades. Given what you know about each character, how do you think they are able to withstand the time apart?

For more discussion questions visit www.readinggroupguides.com

Kyung-sook Shin

Please Look After Mom

978-0-307-73951-3 | \$14.95 | Vintage | TR | April 2012

📖 978-0-307-59549-2 | ♻️ AD: 978-0-307-74739-6

🎧 CD: 978-0-307-74738-9

READERS' ADVISORY

This runaway Korean bestseller (over a million copies sold) has been published in twenty-nine countries. An unexpected and touching story unfolds to pose a series of complex questions about families, and the hidden lives and dreams of those we think we know the best.



ABOUT THE BOOK:

On a trip to the city, sixty-nine-year-old So-nyo is separated from her husband by the crush of people in the Seoul subway station. The train pulls out without her...and Mom is lost...possibly forever. Her family is awash in sorrow and guilt: none of the family seems to have a recent photo of Mom for the "Missing" flyers. Father reveals that her official birth date is incorrect. Do they really know the woman they call Mom? Told from the urgent perspectives of daughter, son, husband, and, in the shattering conclusion, by Mom herself, this is a picture of unknown motherhood and family love.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Mom's life has been defined by her relationships to others and the needs of her family. When her daughter asks, "Did you like to cook?" How does Mom's reply summarize the divide between her own and her daughter's generations?
2. After Mom has gone missing, her husband says to himself, "Your wife, whom you'd forgotten about for fifty years, was present in your heart." Discuss the pain and regret Mom's family feels.
3. Taking out the burial shrouds his wife had made for the two of them, her husband remembers her wish that he die first: "Since you're three years older than me, you should leave three years earlier." What is the effect of the way this passage moves from poignancy to humor and back again?
4. Discuss the return of Mom as storyteller and narrator in the fourth section. What surprised you – and what remained a mystery?
5. What do her children and husband discover about Mom's life only after she disappears? Do her actions seek self-fulfillment? Did she take care of herself?

For more discussion questions visit www.readinggroupcenter.com



Haley Tanner

Vaclav & Lena:

A Novel

978-0-8129-8163-6 | \$15.00 | Dial Press | TR

📞 978-0-679-60387-0 | 📖 AD: 978-0-307-93274-7

📻 CD: 978-0-307-93273-0

READER'S ADVISORY:

For readers of timeless romantic fiction, such as *Major Pettigrew's Last Stand*. Also perfect for Young Adult Book Groups.

ABOUT THE BOOK:

Vaclav and Lena seem destined for each other. They meet as children in an ESL class in Brighton Beach, Brooklyn. Vaclav is precocious and verbal. Lena, struggling with English, takes comfort in the safety of his adoration, his noisy, loving home, and the care of Rasia, his big-hearted mother. Vaclav imagines their story unfolding like a fairy tale, or the perfect illusion from his treasured *Magician's Almanac*. But one day, Lena does not show up for school. She has disappeared from Vaclav and his family's lives as if by a cruel sleight of hand. For the next seven years, Vaclav says goodnight to Lena without fail, wondering if she is doing the same somewhere. On the eve of Lena's seventeenth birthday he finds out. In *Vaclav & Lena*, Haley Tanner has created two unforgettable young protagonists who evoke the joy, the confusion, and the passion of having a profound, everlasting connection.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Discuss the relationships between storytelling, lies, and magic in *Vaclav & Lena*. How do these concepts interact in the novel's climax?
2. Lena's disappearance is a sore point between Vaclav and Rasia. Do you think Rasia made the right choice by remaining silent about it?
3. Discuss the challenges of immigration in the book. How does language play a role in assimilation for Vaclav and Lena? How does Rasia try to connect with her Americanized son?
4. Rasia and her husband, Oleg, seem to have had very different experiences in immigrating to America. What factors contribute to this difference in their experience?
5. Discuss the novel's settings. How does the Russian emigre community of Brighton Beach have an effect on Vaclav and Lena? How does the fantastical world of Coney Island?

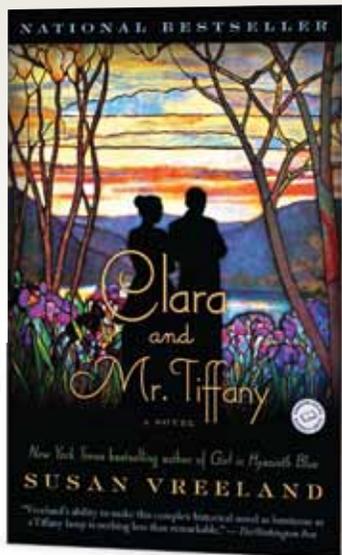
For more discussion questions visit www.randomhousereaderscircle.com

Susan Vreeland
**Clara &
Mr. Tiffany**

978-1-4000-6816-6 | \$26.00/\$30.00C | Random House | HC
978-0-8129-8018-9 | \$15.00/\$18.00C | RH Trade Paperbacks | TR
March 2012
📞 978-0-679-60451-8 | 📻 CD: 978-0-307-87672-0

READER'S ADVISORY:
For fans of Tracy Chevalier and Nancy Horan.

“There’s no excuse for any reader of high-quality literary fiction to let this novel pass by.”—*Booklist* (starred review).



ABOUT THE BOOK:

It’s 1893, and at the Chicago World’s Fair, Louis Comfort Tiffany makes his debut with a luminous exhibition of innovative stained-glass windows that he hopes will earn him a place on the international artistic stage. But behind the scenes in his New York studio is the freethinking Clara Driscoll, head of his women’s division, who conceives of and designs nearly all of the iconic leaded-glass lamps for which Tiffany will long be remembered. Never publicly acknowledged, Clara struggles with her desire for artistic recognition and the seemingly insurmountable challenges that she faces as a professional woman. She also yearns for love and companionship, and is devoted in different ways to five men, including Tiffany, who enforces a strict policy: He does not employ married women. Ultimately, Clara must decide what makes her happiest—the professional world of her hands or the personal world of her heart.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

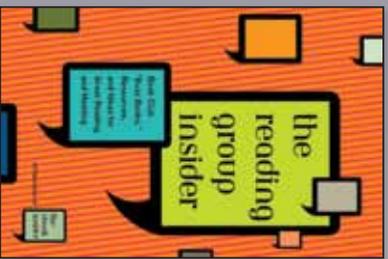
1. How do Clara’s yearnings and goals change during the course of the novel. What personal growth is revealed, and what experiences prompt that growth?
2. During the first Tiffany Ball with Edwin in Chapter Nine, Clara says, “We straddled a double world.” How does that play out in Clara’s experience? What did she learn from Edwin?
3. Of all of the adjectives Clara and Alice heap on Tiffany in Chapter Twenty-seven, which ones do you believe are justified and which are exaggerations? In spite of their accusations, Clara says in the same scene that she adores him. How can that be? Did she truly love him? What kind of love was it?
4. How was Clara’s love different for each of the five men in her life? Given that love can sometimes be an indefinable thing, in each case, what prompted her love and how did it change, if at all?

For more discussion questions or to request an author phone chat visit
<http://www.svreeland.com/tif-dis-questions.html>

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