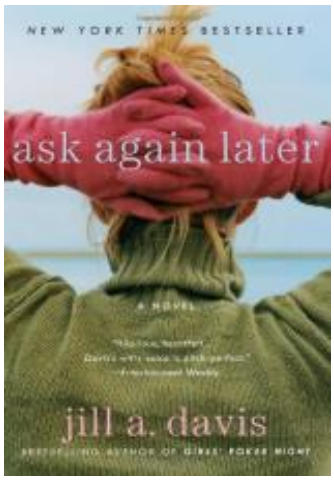
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Ask Again Later

by Jill A. Davis



About the Book

Emily Rhode has a tendency to live with one foot out the door. For her, the best thing about a family crisis is the opportunity to cut and run. When her mother announces that her doctors have found a lump, Emily gladly takes a rain check on life to be with her mother, leaving behind her career, her boyfriend, and those pesky, unanswerable questions about who she is and what she's doing with her life.

But back in her childhood bedroom, Emily realizes that she hasn't run fast or far enough. One evening, while her mother calls everyone in her Rolodex to brief them on her medical crisis and schedule a farewell martini, Emily opens the door, quite literally, to find her past staring her in the face. How do you forge a relationship with the father who left when you were five years old? As Emily attempts to find balance on the emotional see-saw of her life with the help of two hopeful suitors and her Park Avenue princess sister, she takes a no-risk job as a receptionist at his law firm and slowly gets to know the man she once pretended was dead.

Discussion Guide

1. How does Emily's job as receptionist at her father's law firm enable her to better understand her father?

2. How do Joanie's diagnosis of cancer and Marjorie's giving birth to little Malcolm change their respective relationships with Emily, and to what extent are those relationships dysfunctional?

3. In what ways do Emily's conversations with Wendy and Will at her father's firm reveal the peculiar aspects of that office's culture, and why is that culture especially comforting to Emily?

4. How does the structure of **Ask Again Later**, with its short segmented chapters and its frequent flashbacks, affect your appreciation of Emily's response to her mother's crisis?

5. To what extent does Emily's decision to leave her boyfriend, Sam, stem from his criticism of and frustration with her inability to commit?

6. What does Emily hope to achieve by eavesdropping on her father's telephone conversations, and why does she hold him accountable for all of her unsatisfactory relationships with men?

7. What does Emily hope to achieve by eavesdropping on her father's telephone conversations, and why does she hold him accountable for all of her unsatisfactory relationships with men?

8. In what respects is Emily's father, Jim, the catalyst for her renewed relationship with her ex-boyfriend, Sam?

9. How do Joanie's surprising revelations about her children's early years impact Emily's feelings for her father?

10. How does Emily's longing for a child relate to all that she has experienced as an adult child of divorced parents in the course of **Ask Again Later**?

Author Bio

Jill A. Davis was a writer for ?The Late Show with David Letterman,? where she received five Emmy nominations. She has also written several network pilots, screenplays, and short stories. She lives in New York City with her husband and daughter.

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Publication Date: January 29, 2008
Paperback: 272 pages
Publisher: Harper Paperbacks
ISBN-10: 0060875976
ISBN-13: 9780060875978