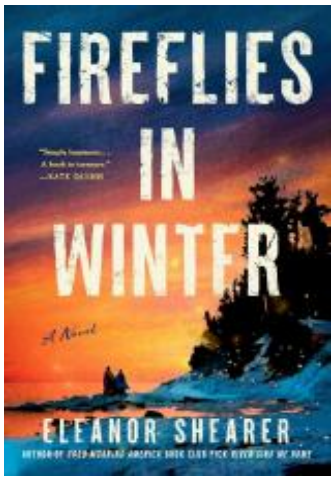
Fireflies in Winter

by Eleanor Shearer



About the Book

A gripping novel of two young women fighting for survival on the edge of the wilderness, and the love that simultaneously sustains them and threatens their very existence, from the author of the "Good Morning America" Book Club pick RIVER SING ME HOME.

Nova Scotia, 1796. Cora, an orphan newly arrived from Jamaica, has never felt cold like this. In the depths of winter, everyone in her community huddles together in their homes to keep warm. So when she sees a shadow slipping through the trees, Cora thinks her eyes are deceiving her...until she creeps out into the moonlight and finds the tracks in the snow.

Agnes is in hiding. On the run from her former life, she has learned what it takes to survive alone in the wilderness. But she can afford no mistakes. When she first spies the young woman in the woods, she is afraid. Yet Cora is fearless, and their paths are destined to cross.

Deep among the cedars, Cora and Agnes find a fragile place of safety. But when Agnes? past closes in, they are confronted with the dangerous price of freedom --- and of love.

With evocative prose and immersive storytelling, FIREFLIES IN WINTER is a powerful novel about love --- love for the wilderness in all its unforgiving beauty, and love between two women who risk everything to be together.

Discussion Guide

1. FIREFLIES IN WINTER is structured around the seasons of the year. Did you like this structure? How did you feel it shaped the story?

2. How are Cora and Agnes different and how are they similar in their attitudes to life and love? Do you think they

change each other over the course of the book? How?

3. The novel includes five chapters from the points of view of characters other than Cora or Agnes, like Thursday and Montague James. Which of these were your favorite? What did you feel like these perspectives added to the book?

4. Cora does not have any biological family in the novel, but she is close with Leah and Benjamin and was close to Elsy back in Jamaica. What did you make of these relationships? What kind of love was expressed within them?

5. In the novel, love is described as ?a small word with so many meanings. It is a blanket over every kind of fondness.? How do different forms of love feature in the novel? Did particular forms and expressions of love resonate with you? Why?

6. The natural world is an important setting in this story, and over the course of the book Cora learns more about the wilderness, its plants and animals. What did you make of the setting? Why do you think the story takes place in the setting that it does?

7. What aspects of survival does the novel explore?

8. What role do animals play in the story?

9. Did you learn anything new about slavery from this book? How do the different characters think about slavery and freedom?

10. Cora and the other Maroons begin the novel in exile from Jamaica. Agnes has come from the American South and now lives in the forest. And, before the beginning of the book, many Black Loyalists have moved to Freetown in Sierra Leone. What do you think this story says about what it means to find home?

Author Bio

Eleanor Shearer is a mixed-race writer and the granddaughter of Windrush generation immigrants. She splits her time between London and Ramsgate on the English coast so that she never has to go too long without seeing the sea. For her Master?s degree in Politics at the University of Oxford, Eleanor studied the legacy of slavery and the case for reparations, and her fieldwork in St. Lucia and Barbados helped inspire her first novel, RIVER SING ME HOME.

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