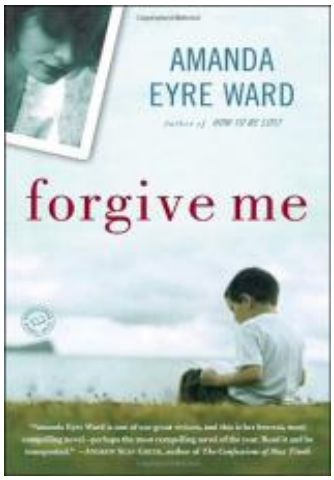
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Forgive Me

by Amanda Eyre Ward



About the Book

From the acclaimed author of **How to Be Lost** comes a gorgeous new novel about love, memory, and motherhood.

Nadine Morgan travels the world as a journalist, covering important events, following dangerous leads, and running from anything that might tie her down. Since an assignment in Cape Town ended in tragedy and regret, Nadine has not returned to South Africa, or opened her heart?until she hears the story of Jason Irving.

Jason, an American student, was beaten to death by angry local youths at the height of the apartheid era. Years later, his mother is told that Jason?s killers have applied for amnesty. Jason?s parents pack their bags and fly from Nantucket to Cape Town. Filled with rage, Jason?s mother resolves to fight the murderers? pleas for forgiveness.

As Nadine follows the Irvings to beautiful, ghost-filled South Africa, she is flooded with memories of a time when the pull toward adventure and intrigue left her with a broken heart. Haunted by guilt and a sense of remorse, and hoping to lose herself in her coverage of the murder trial, Nadine grows closer to Jason?s mother as well as to the mother of one of Jason?s killers?with profound consequences. In a country both foreign and familiar, Nadine is forced to face long-buried demons, come to terms with the missing pieces of her own family past, and learn what it means to truly love and to forgive.

With her dazzling prose and resonant themes, Amanda Eyre Ward has joined the ranks of such beloved American novelists as Anne Tyler and Ann Patchett. Gripping, darkly humorous, and luminous, **Forgive Me** is an unforgettable story of dreams and longing, betrayal and redemption.

Discussion Guide

1. If you have read Ward?s previous novels, **How to Be Lost** and **Sleep Toward Heaven**, did you find similarities

between them and **Forgive Me**? How would you describe Ward?s writing style? To which other writers would you compare her work?

2. Was the depiction of apartheid in **Forgive Me** consistent with what you have heard or read, or did it change your sense of the conditions? Was the South Africa of the novel familiar or new to you?

3. Ward says she was compelled by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission?s model, ?the concept of telling the truth and being set free.? What were your impressions of the TRC? Can you imagine how hearing a perpetrator?s story in his or her own words might influence your judgment of a crime?

4. How does forgiveness figure into the novel? Who seeks forgiveness? Who is able to forgive? Did the novel make you think about forgiveness in your own life?

5. What did you think of the Irvings? Could you forgive someone who killed a loved one?

6. After finishing the novel, did your reading of the epigraph change?

7. Did your feelings about Nadine change over the course of the novel? What parts of her character do you relate to the most? Does she do anything you found morally questionable?

8. One reviewer wrote that upon finishing **Forgive Me**, ?readers will want to start all over again, looking for the clues they missed the first time around when Ward, like a cunning magician, so deftly led them astray.? Did you reread sections of the novel morethan once, uncovering clues? How did the journal entries affect the unfolding story for you? What about them did you find most poignant? Misleading? Illuminating?

9. There are many ambitions in this novel?from Nadine and Maxim?s commitment to capturing the ravages of war, to Thola?s dancing career, to the aspirations charted in the ?Nantucket to Stardom? entries. How does ambition define the characters in **Forgive Me**? How does it disappoint them?

10. In many ways motherhood is at the heart of this book. What do the mothers in the novel?Ann, Fikile, Sophia, Lily, and ultimately Nadine?have in common? How do their circumstances and choices distinguish them from one another?

11. How does growing up without a mother affect Nadine? In what ways does she seem to reconsider the role of a mother? Did you find the path she chooses unexpected or inevitable? Does it resonate with your own experience of reconciling work and family life?

12. Do you think Thola loved George? What struck you most about their story?

Author Bio

Amanda Eyre Ward is the *New York Times* bestselling author of CAT & VIVIAN, SLEEP TOWARD HEAVEN, HOW TO BE LOST, LOVE STORIES IN THIS TOWN, FORGIVE ME, CLOSE YOUR EYES, THE SAME SKY, THE

NEARNESS OF YOU, THE JETSETTERS, THE LIFEGUARDS, LOVERS AND LIARS and ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES.

Her bestselling novels have been featured in *People* magazine, the *New York Times* and more. Amanda publishes nonfiction in *Travel + Leisure*, the *New York Times*, *Texas Monthly* and more, and publishes original work on Audible.com. Amanda?s work has been optioned for film and television and translated into 15 languages. She lives in Austin, TX.

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