ReadingGroupGuides
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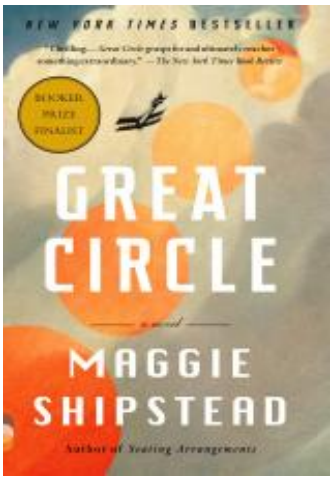
Great Circle

by Maggie Shipstead



About the Book

An unforgettable story of a daredevil female aviator determined to chart her own course in life, at any cost, GREAT CIRCLE spans Prohibition-era Montana, the Pacific Northwest, Alaska, New Zealand, wartime London and modern-day Los Angeles.

After being rescued as infants from a sinking ocean liner in 1914, Marian and Jamie Graves are raised by their dissolute uncle in Missoula, Montana. There --- after encountering a pair of barnstorming pilots passing through town in beat-up biplanes --- Marian commences her lifelong love affair with flight. At 14 she drops out of school and finds an unexpected and dangerous patron in a wealthy bootlegger who provides a plane and subsidizes her lessons, an arrangement that will haunt her for the rest of her life, even as it allows her to fulfill her destiny: circumnavigating the globe by flying over the North and South Poles.

A century later, Hadley Baxter is cast to play Marian in a film that centers on Marian's disappearance in Antarctica. Vibrant, canny and disgusted with the claustrophobia of Hollywood, Hadley is eager to redefine herself after a romantic film franchise has imprisoned her in the grip of cult celebrity. Her immersion into the character of Marian unfolds, thrillingly, alongside Marian's own story, as the two women's fates --- and their hunger for self-determination in vastly different geographies and times --- collide.

Epic and emotional, meticulously researched and gloriously told, GREAT CIRCLE is a monumental work of art, and a tremendous leap forward for the prodigiously gifted Maggie Shipstead.

Discussion Guide

1. Why do you think Marian wants to fly around the world? Have you ever wanted to take a major risk without quite knowing why?

2. What do you think Hadley wants from playing the role of Marian? Do you think her expectations are met?

3. How is Marian?s life shaped by her experiences of love? Do you think she really wants to love someone? What about Hadley?

4. What do you think is Marian?s idea of freedom? What is yours?

5. How does Marian?s relationship with her brother, Jamie, evolve over time? How would you react if you had a sibling like Marian?

6. Do you think *Peregrine* is going to be a good movie?

7. How do you think Marian was shaped by her unusual childhood? Do you think she was bruised or strengthened by the fact that she never knew her parents?

8. Hadley says that no story can ever be whole. What do you think she means?

9. Which friend or relative would you pass this book on to and why?

Author Bio

Maggie Shipstead is the *New York Times* bestselling author of GREAT CIRCLE, ASTONISHING MEATING ARRANGEMENT and story collection YOU VR IN She Dylan Prize and Tom Wolfe Prize Book Prize for First Fiction. She is a graduate of the Iowa Writers? Workshop, a former Wallace Stegner Fellow at Stanford, and th

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