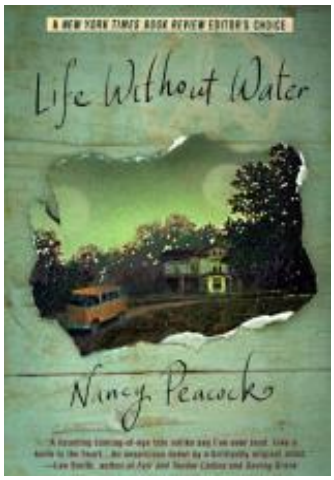
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Life Without Water

by Nancy Peacock



About the Book

This is the kind of book that you read, love and then give to a friend saying, "You have to read this...

In a powerful and acute debut, highly acclaimed author Nancy Peacock gives us a young narrator who is both knowing and innocent, trusting and fearful: a girl named Cedar, who reflects on her childhood in the wake of the Vietnam war. As she and her young mother Sara both come of age, Cedar explores the intense bond--and discovers the boundaries--of their mother-daughter relationship. Living as hippies in an abandoned farmhouse in North Carolina, Sara and Cedar survive a number of romantic and domestic misadventures, first with Cedar's father Sol, and later with a group of friends living together in a commune-style home. Lyrical, bittersweet and utterly unforgettable, Life Without Water uniquely captures this time--and its joys, hazards, complexities and disappointments.

Discussion Guide

1. Why does Sara never read Jimmie's last letter? What does keeping it sealed mean to her?

2. Cedar obeys her mom, and doesn't tell Sol when they're getting ready to leave. Why? What makes her relationship with her mom closer than that with her dad?

3. Sara decides to start a new life after Two Moons burns down, away from Elaine and Woody. Why do you think she does this?

4. What attracted Sara to Sol and Daniel? What attracts her to Jack, who is so different from the other two? What do you think contributed to the instability of Sara's relationships with Sol and Daniel?

5. A lot of kids get jealous when a new child arrives on the scene, but Cedar never feels that way about Roo. Why?

6. Sara implies that the fathers of her two children were choices influenced by her brother's death. What do you think led her to chose these men, so different from her brother the soldier?

7. How realistically do you feel the commune life is portrayed in this book? What makes it (in)accurate?

8. How does the time period portrayed in this book compare with your memories of that era -- or with the stories you've heard about that time?

9. Why did John Lennon's death make Sara and Cedar want to remember Two Moons? Why didn't they include Roo?

10. Why doesn't Sara tell her own story? Why is Cedar so fiercely protective of her mother?

11. One of the remarkable things about Sara and Cedar's commune lifestyle is the freedom it affords. What does **Life Without Water** say about this kind of freedom? In your opinion, is the price worth its benefits?

Author Bio

Nancy Peacock is the author of the novels LIFE WITHOUT WATER and HOME ACROSS THE ROAD, as well as the memoir A BROOM OF ONE'S OWN: Words on Writing, Housecleaning, and Life. She currently teaches writing classes and workshops in and around Chapel Hill, North Carolina, where she lives with her husband, Ben.

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Publication Date: March 2, 1998
Paperback: 224 pages
Publisher: Bantam
ISBN-10: 0553379291
ISBN-13: 9780553379297