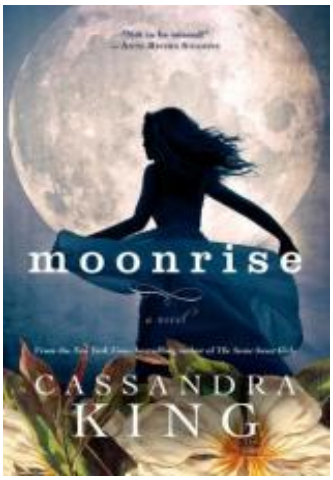
Moonrise

by Cassandra King Conroy



About the Book

When Helen Honeycutt falls in love with Emmet Justice, a charismatic television journalist who has recently lost his wife in a tragic accident, their sudden marriage creates a rift between her new husband and his oldest friends, who resent Helen?s intrusion into their tightly knit circle. Hoping to mend fences, the newlyweds join the group for a summer at his late wife?s family home in the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains. Helen soon falls under the spell not only of the little mountain town and its inhabitants, but also of Moonrise, her predecessor?s Victorian mansion, named for its unique but now sadly neglected nocturnal gardens. But the harder Helen tries to fit in, the more obvious it is that she will never measure up to the woman she replaced.

Someone is clearly determined to drive her away, but who wants her gone, and why? As Emmet grows more remote, Helen reaches out to the others in the group, only to find that she can?t trust anyone. When she stumbles on the secret behind her predecessor?s untimely death, Helen must decide if she can ever trust --- or love --- again.

Discussion Guide

1. MOONRISEwas inspired by the author?s lifelong love of, REBECCA, Daphne du Maurier?s classic gothic novel, reminding us that the novels we admire in our youths resonate throughout our lives. What other novels come to mind that were based on or simply inspired by other classics? Are there novels you read years ago that made an impression on you and that you?ve never forgotten?

2. The Victorian house and gardens once cherished by Emmet?s deceased wife Rosalyn are very much their own characters in this novel. Do you feel that houses and gardens somehow contain the spirits of the past owners or occupants? Have you ever lived in a haunted house yourself? How did you know it was inhabited by spirits?

3. The author believes as much research often goes into writing a good novel as a work of nonfiction. Do you agree or disagree? Have you ever tried your hand at writing a novel? Would you like to? What would you write about?

4. What special challenges come with writing a novel from multiple points of view? MOONRISE has three narrators:, Helen, Emmet?s second wife;: Tansy, the Atlanta beauty and socialite; and Willa, the local woman who is the caretaker for these summer homes. The author believes that elements of writers? personalities must exist in the characters they create or else they will never be believable. Did you find any one of these women more or less believable than the others?

5. MOONRISE distinguishes itself from King?s previous work by offering more fully developed male characters. Even though all the narrators are women, did you feel that she succeeded in making the men come alive on the page? Do you think that raising three sons might have made King understand the male psyche more deeply than if she had she raised daughters? Or is having brothers, fathers, husbands, or male friends enough to bring a deep understanding of the opposite sex?

6. The group of friends reject Helen partly because they feel Emmet did not wait long enough before remarrying. How long is long enough to wait after the death of a spouse? Does a remarriage soon after a death of a spouse always reflect negatively on the quality of the marriage that preceded it?

7. What did you think of Noel and Tansy?s relationship in the book? Do you think it?s possible for men and women to be friends in the long run if they haven?t worked out any potential feelings they might have for one another? And even if the feelings are technically ?worked out,? do you think a friendship like Noel and Tansy?s is possible?

8. The relationships between women in MOONRISE have been compared to those created by Margaret Atwood in her novels, CAT'S EYE and THE ROBBER BRIDE. All three novels explore the complex depths, both beautiful and treacherous, of women?s friendships. How do your own relationships compare? Can women be friends without sometimes experiencing the complicated undercurrents, however temporary, of jealousy, disappointment, or disillusionment?

Author Bio

Cassandra King is an award-winning and bestselling novelist whose fiction has won the hearts of readers everywhere, especially in the American south. Often told in first person, her novels portray strong and memorable characters who struggle with the same timely issues and dilemmas that readers face in their own lives. Before becoming an author, she has taught creative writing on the college level, conducted corporate writing seminars, and worked as a human interest reporter. The widow of acclaimed author Pat Conroy, Cassandra resides in Beaufort, South Carolina, where she is honorary chair of the Pat Conroy Literary Center.

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