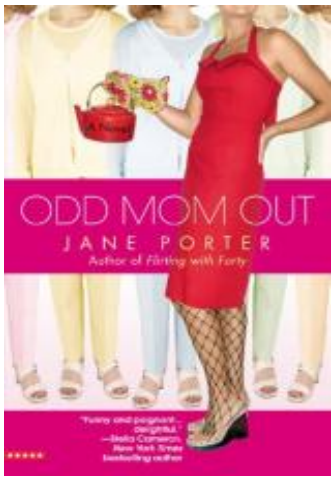
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Odd Mom Out

by Jane Porter



About the Book

DOES SHE REALLY WANT TO BE A MEMBER OF THIS MOMMY CLUB?

Advertising executive Marta Zinsser is no poster child for her wealthy Seattle suburb-and nothing could please her more. This former New Yorker wears combat boots, not Manolos, and drives a righteous Harley hog instead of a Mercedes SUV. Now she's launching her own agency in this land of the Microsoft elite, even though her ten-year-old daughter wishes she'd put on a sweater set and just be normal.

Can this ex-urbanite remain uniquely herself without alienating the inner circle of smug, cookie-cutter executive wives? And when push comes to shove, can she stop being the proud odd mom out and take a chance at something frighteningly-and tantalizingly-new?

Discussion Guide

1. Porter's voice is strong and vivid in the her portrayal of a mother-teenage daughter relationship. How would you describe the growth of Marta and Eva's relationship as the story progresses. What are some of the lessons they have taught each other by the end of the book?

2. Marta is shocked to learn Eva knows about sex at her age. She recalls her own experience about having the ?discussion' about sex with her mother and realizes how different it is with her own child. What about Marta's realizations hits home with your own experiences?

3. Marta and Eva are trying to fit into a neighborhood and a way of life that is very different from what they're used to. Eva is desperate to be like everyone else and be popular at school where as Marta's never worried about what people thought and she still doesn't. Discuss the different ways this causes conflict in their relationship. Have you had similar

experiences you can share when you or your child didn't fit in with a group or in a place? How did that make you feel and how did you handle it?

4. Eva has a fascination with bridal magazines and is focused on convincing Marta to get married so they can be a "normal" family. Marta, on the other hand, is quite content being a single mom and doesn't feel she needs a man to fulfill her. In today's society, is there still a stigma attached to being a single mother? Do people tend to view being single as a failed life or one doomed with boredom and loneliness? Do you think, in reality, a woman can live the life of a single mother, be totally content and give her child(ren) a healthy, family lifestyle?

5. Discuss Marta's character. What did you love most about her? Did you find yourself identifying with her on any level? What makes her different from you in terms of dealing with difficult situations?

6. During one of the most important meetings of her career, Marta receives a phone call that forces her to make a choice between being a mother or focusing on landing the account she's worked so hard for. She makes her decision but it costs her a great deal. This is one of the common problems a working, single mom often faces in real life too. Do you know any single mothers who work full time? Are you one of them? How difficult is it for single moms to juggle family and work? Do you think single Dads have the same issues? Or is it easier for men to walk out of a meeting due to family emergencies than it is for women? Do single Dads have certain advantages over single Moms in terms of how society views them?

7. Marta thinks, "Eva doesn't know yet what I know about the world and being female. She doesn't understand that you have to establish yourself, establish your identity and boundaries, young. Girls can be vicious, far more cruel than boys " Do you agree with this point of view? Explain why.

8. What is the significance?the importance of Marta's motorcycle to her? How does it make her feel when Eva asks her to sell it? Have you had to give up something that was extremely important to you, in a personal way, for the sake of your child? How did it make you feel?

9. Discuss Marta's friendship with her friends Tiana and Shey. Which character appealed to you more and why?

10. Does Marta's depiction of life in Seattle and Bellevue conflict with your image of Western Washington? Have you ever been to Washington? If so, what's your favorite memory from your trip?

11. Marta encounters Luke at the grocery store while she's shopping. What was your impression of him at that point in the story? How well, in your opinion, are he and Marta suited to each other?

12. Marta has trust issues because of her past experiences and there is a lot that Luke didn't reveal about himself. She has a problem with his decision to keep secrets and yet he doesn't see the situation quite the way she does. How did you feel about his attitude in this matter? How would you have reacted if it had been you in Marta's place?

13. What was the most emotional scene in **Odd Mom Out** for you? Which aspect of the story did you enjoy the most?

14. Marta thinks, "The problem when you're a small family, when you're a family of two, is that there is no one else to give space, distance, perspective. There is no one else to go to, to lean on, to reach for." Discuss Marta's struggle as a

single mom to get past these difficult times. What are some of the things you do, as a mother, when you're confronted by a hurtful or difficult situation with your child?

15. Marta thinks, "The problem when you're a small family, when you're a family of two, is that there is no one else to give space, distance, perspective. There is no one else to go to, to lean on, to reach for." Discuss Marta's struggle as a single mom to get past these difficult times. What are some of the things you do, as a mother, when you're confronted by a hurtful or difficult situation with your child?

16. Are you a PTA mom? Do you volunteer a lot at school or have a say on the committees? Do you find it a satisfying role to play? How do you juggle work, family life and volunteering? Do you ever feel guilty for not being involved enough in the school's PTA activities? Are you an Odd Mom Out in the life you live?

17. How much of the popularity wars at school do you think stem from the parents and their point of view? Discuss the impact of social status and material things impact children today? Was it the same when you were growing up or have things changed a lot since then?

18. What was your impression of Taylor Young? From the little we've seen of her in this novel, could you identify with her on any level? Do you know anyone like her?

Author Bio

Jane Porter, the *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestselling author of 40 romances and 11 women's fiction novels, holds an MA in Writing from the University of San Francisco and has been a finalist for the prestigious RITA award five times, with her novella, TAKE ME, COWBOY, winning the Novella Category July 2014. Jane's wildly popular novel, FLIRTING WITH FORTY, was made into a Lifetime movie starring Heather Locklear and was loosely inspired by her husband, Ty Gurney, an Oahu resident with his own surf school in Waikiki. An advocate for writers, Jane founded Tule Publishing in 2013 to give romance and women's fiction authors support and opportunities.

Critical Praise

"Fresh, fun, and real, Jane Porter's writing is a delight!"

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