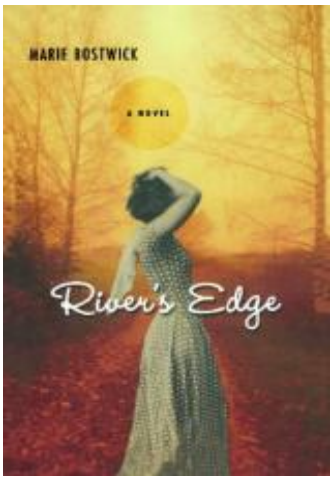
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River's Edge

by Marie Bostwick



About the Book

One extraordinary woman will come of age --- and come into her own --- in this haunting portrait of an ever-changing America during the tumult and uncertainty of World War II.

In a Germany teetering on the brink of World War II, Elise Braun, motherless child of a career military officer, is an unwilling refugee. When her father realizes his country has fallen into the hands of a tyrant he must defy at any cost, Elise is sent to live in a Connecticut farming village with a minister's family. An accomplished pianist whose only solace in this strange land is her music, Elise cannot know how she will come to care for her adopted family, how many will turn against her once war is declared and how she will be tested when the men she loves most fight for opposing armies.

Discussion Guide

1. At the beginning of the story, Elise says she doesn't trust memory. The implication is that we tend to see our past through rose-colored glasses. Do you think that Elise is correct in her assertion? Has she idealized her relationship with her mother? If so, how?

2. Elise is an outstanding pianist, nearly a prodigy. How does she use music to express herself? Does her reliance on her musical voice help or hinder her ability to relate to other people?

3. The Mullers have a large family and each child is utterly different. Which of the Muller siblings is your favorite and why? Does this character remind you of any member of your family, and, if so, describe who this is and the similarities.

4. When Elise comes to Brightfield, she seems determined to dislike the Mullers and is suspicious of their intentions, but in time she comes to regard them as family. What do you think was the turning point in Elise's relationship with the Mullers?

5. The character of Mrs. Ludwig is somewhat contradictory. Do you think she was curmudgeonly, comical, compassionate, or a mix of all three? What role do you think she played in helping Elise adjust to life in the United States?

6. At the beginning of the story, what qualities in Elise endeared her to the community of Brightfield, and what qualities were off-putting? How did Elise change as the story progressed, and how did this affect the community's opinion of her?

7. Cookie is surprised when she learns that Elise and Junior are in love. Were you? Have you ever had a relationship that began with conflict and ended with affection? If so, what happened to change your relationship?

8. If **River's Edge** were made into a movie, who would you pick to play Elise and Junior? What about Papa and Mama?

9. The women of Brightfield tend to play very traditional feminine roles as wives, mothers, and sweethearts, waiting (sometimes in vain) for their men to return from war. Did you see them as strong partners in their marriage and love relationships or as subservient to the men in their lives? How? If your marriage partner is in the military and fighting abroad, how is your role similar to, and different from, those played by the characters in **River's Edge**?

10. When the war begins, Elise finds herself the object of undeserved scorn, prejudice, and even hatred because of her German heritage. The story in **River's Edge** takes place a half century ago, but did you see parallels in what was going on then and what is happening today? Give examples.

11. When she learns about the acts of atrocity committed by German soldiers in Poland, Elise is nearly overcome with guilt, though she had nothing to do with these acts. What other characters in **River's Edge** must come to terms with their feelings of unresolved guilt?

12. How does Elise use her own experiences to help Junior deal with the tragedy and pain he suffers as a soldier in the war?

13. As **River's Edge** concludes, what do you think the future holds for Junior and Elise? What about the other residents of Brightfield?

Author Bio

A *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestselling author of more than 20 uplifting works of historical and contemporary fiction, Marie?s books are beloved by readers across the globe.

Drawing on her lifelong love of quilting and her unshakable belief in the power of sisterhood, Marie?s popular *Cobbled Court Quilt* series has been embraced by quilters and non-sewers alike. Her stand-alone books have also found a

passionate following among lovers of women?s fiction. Marie?s novel, THE SECOND SISTER, was adapted into the 2018 Hallmark Hall of Fame feature film *Christmas Everlasting*, starring Patti LaBelle. Marie?s novel, HOPE ON THE INSIDE, was published in March 2019 and was chosen as a *Reader?s Digest* ?Select Editions? book.

Marie lives in Washington state with her husband and a beautiful but moderately spoiled Cavalier King Charles Spaniel.

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