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The Missing Pages

by Alyson Richman



About the Book

A ghost in a library. A story waiting to be told. THE MISSING PAGES is a rich, lyrical novel that reminds us that books are as eternal as the soul.

1912: Harry Widener, a promising and passionate book collector, boards the *Titanic* holding tight to a priceless volume he?s just purchased in London. After catastrophe strikes the ship, Harry?s last known words are that he must return to his cabin to retrieve his latest treasure. Neither the young man nor the book is ever seen again. Honoring her son?s memory, Harry?s mother builds the Harry Widener Memorial Library at Harvard to house his extensive book collection and ensure his legacy.

Decades later, Violet Hutchins, a Harvard sophomore recovering from her own great loss, is working as a page at the Widener Library. When mysterious things begin happening at the library, Violet wonders if Harry Widener?s ghost is trying to communicate with her, seeking Violet to uncover a long-buried secret that Harry took with him to the grave.

For fans of THE MIDNIGHT LIBRARY and THE BOOK THIEF, bestselling author Alyson Richman has written a love story, a ghost story, and an elegy to the healing power of books.

Discussion Guide

1. The power of grief is an important theme in THE MISSING PAGES. Discuss how Eleanor and Violet both endure different shades of loss but also find ways to channel their energy into healing.

2. How does this novel speak to the different shades of love: maternal, romantic, friendship and eternal? How does loss impact those connected to Harry --- from his mother, Ada, to even his mentor, Dr. Rosenbach?

3. Discuss how Harry?s pastime of collecting books is unique to him? What motivates him to purchase certain books above others? How do you see the act of collection? As something for personal fulfillment or financial investment? Or both?

4. The *Titanic* has been a source of mystery and interest for over a century. What draws people to this tragedy? What new information did you learn from reading the novel?

5. The power of legacy and the act of remembering are two important themes in THE MISSING PAGES. What would you like your legacy to be? If you?ve lost someone, have you found a meaningful way to honor that individual?

6. How do the supernatural elements influence the narrative? Do you think Violet had to experience her own grief to be open to Harry?s communication?

7. THE MISSING PAGES is described as a ?ghost story, a love story, and a library story.? How do these genres intertwine, and what does each contribute to the overall impact and message of the novel?

8. Discuss the role of secrets and hidden truths in the novel. Harry, Ada and Violet all keep certain aspects of their lives from others. What is the impact of these secrets on the characters and the plot?

9. How does the novel explore the themes of women?s roles in the early 20th century, particularly within the world of books? Consider Ada?s career as a bookseller?s assistant and her ambitions to cultivate a market for female collectors, as well as Eleanor Widener?s monumental undertaking of building a library for her son.

10. Discuss Eleanor Widener as a character. How does her grief for Harry shape her decision to build the library? How does her character contrast or compare with Ada?s, particularly in connection to their shared love of books?

Author Bio

Alyson Richman is the *USA Today* bestselling and #1 internationally bestselling author of several historical novels, including THE VELVET HOURS, THE GARDEN OF LETTERS and THE LOST WIFE, which is currently in development for a major motion picture. Alyson graduated from Wellesley College with a degree in art history and Japanese studies. She herself is an accomplished painter and her novels combine her deep love of art, historical research and travel. Alyson's novels have been published in 25 languages and have reached the bestseller lists both in the United States and abroad. She lives on Long Island with her husband and two children, where she is currently at work on her next novel.

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