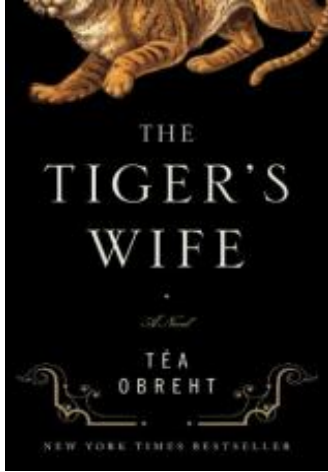


# The Tiger's Wife

by Téa Obreht

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## About the Book

n/a

## Discussion Guide

1. Natalia says that the key to her grandfather's life and death "lies between two stories: the story of the tiger's wife, and the story of the deathless man." What power do the stories we tell about ourselves have to shape our identity and help us understand our lives?
2. Which of the different ways the characters go about making peace with the dead felt familiar from your own life? Which took you by surprise?
3. Natalia believes that her grandfather's memories of the village apothecary "must have been imperishable." What lesson do you think he might have learned from what happened to the Apothecary?
4. What significance does the tiger have to the different characters in the novel: Natalia, her grandfather, the tiger's wife, the villagers? Why do you think Natalia's grandfather's reaction to the tiger's appearance in the village was so different than the rest of the villagers?
5. "The story of this war --- dates, names, who started it, why --- that belongs to everyone," Natalia's grandfather tells her. But "those moments you keep to yourself" are more important. By eliding place names and specific events of recent Balkan history, what do you think the author is doing?
6. When the deathless man and the grandfather share a last meal before the bombing of Sarobor, the grandfather urges the

deathless man to tell the waiter his fate so he can go home and be with his family. Is Gavran Gailé right to decide to stop telling people that they are going to die? Would you rather know your death was coming or go in suddenness??

7. Did knowing more about Luka's past make him more sympathetic? Why do you think the author might have chosen to give the back stories of Luka, Dari'a the Bear, and the apothecary?

8. The copy of THE JUNGLE BOOK Natalia's grandfather always carries around in his coat pocket is not among the possessions she collects after his death. What do you think happens to it?

9. The novel moves back and forth between myth and modern-day "real life." What did you think of the juxtaposition of folklore and contemporary realism?

10. Of all the themes of this novel --- war, storytelling, family, death, myth, etc. --- which one resonated the most for you?

## Author Bio

Téa Obreht's debut novel, THE TIGER'S WIFE, won the 2011 Orange Prize for Fiction and was an international bestseller. Her work has appeared in *The Best American Short Stories*, *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic*, *Harper's Magazine* and *Zoetrope: All-Story*, among many others. Originally from the former Yugoslavia, she now lives in New York with her husband and teaches at Hunter College.

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