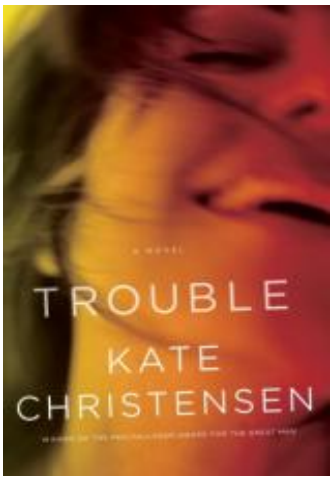
ReadingGroupGuides
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Trouble

by Kate Christensen



About the Book

A vibrant story of female friendship and midlife sexual awakening from the acclaimed author of **The Great Man**

Josie is a Manhattan psychotherapist living a comfortable life with her husband and daughter --- until, while suddenly flirting with a man at a party, she is struck with the sudden realization that she must leave her passionless marriage. A thrillingly sordid encounter with a stranger she meets at a bar immediately follows. At the same time, her college friend Raquel, a Los Angeles rock star, is being pilloried in the press for sleeping with a much younger man who happens to have a pregnant girlfriend. This proves to be red meat to the gossip hounds of the Internet. The two friends escape to Mexico City for a Christmas holiday of retreat and rediscovery of their essential selves. Sex has gotten these two bright, complicated women into interesting trouble, and the story of their struggles to get out of that trouble is totally gripping at every turn.

A tragicomedy of marriage and friendship, **Trouble** is a funny, piercing, and moving examination of the battle between the need for connection and the quest for freedom that every modern woman must fight.

Discussion Guide

1. Do you empathize or disagree with Josie's decision to leave Anthony and her reasons for doing so? Did you find Josie to be a sympathetic character at the beginning of the novel? In the end? Why or why not?

2. In Chapter Two, we see Josie in four psychotherapy sessions with her clients. Why do you think the author included these scenes in the novel? Do Josie's training and experience as a therapist enable her to have increased insight into the people around her?

3. Mexico City serves as a needed escape valve for both Josie and Raquel. Why do you think the author chose this city

for the setting of converging and diverging paths of these two friends? What role does Mexico itself play in the unfolding story?

4. There are several instances and places during the novel in which a ritualized encounter takes place, among them the paparazzi descending on Raquel, a bullfight, and references to the human-sacrifice rituals of the Aztecs. Are there other instances of such encounters? What do you think the author is suggesting about the apparent ongoing human need for them?

5. On page 307, going home from Raquel's mother's house in a taxi with Wendy, Josie reflects about the kind of friend she has been to Raquel: ?Maybe she and I had failed each other by allowing each other the freedom to be ourselves, and maybe that was the inevitable consequence of true friendship.? What do you think she means by this? Do you agree?

Author Bio

Kate Christensen is the author of 10 novels, most recently GOOD COMPANY. Her fourth novel, THE GREAT MAN, won the 2008 PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction. She has also published two food-centric memoirs, BLUE PLATE SPECIAL and HOW TO COOK A MOOSE, which won the 2016 Maine Literary Award for Memoir. Her essays, reviews and short pieces have appeared in a wide variety of publications and anthologies. She lives with her husband and their two dogs in northern New Mexico.

Critical Praise

"**The Great Man** is as unexpectedly generous as it is entertaining . . . Christensen is a witty observer of the art universe."

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