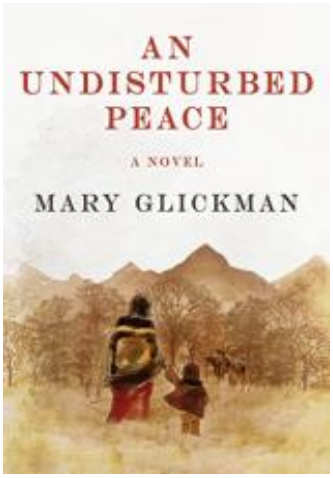
An Undisturbed Peace

by Mary Glickman



About the Book

Mary Glickman?s sweeping historical novel is the story of a trio of outsiders who will each be profoundly affected by the Indian Removal Act. There is Abrahan, a young Jewish immigrant who must live in indentured servitude to his uncle until his debts have been fulfilled. In his peddler?s travels, Abe falls madly for Dark Water, the daughter of a powerful Cherokee chief, now in exile. Then there?s Dark Water?s estranged lover Jacob, a black slave, accused of the murder of a white man.

Linked by love and friendship, Abe, Dark Water and Jacob face the horrors of President Jackson?s Indian Removal Act as the tribes of the South make the grueling journey across the Mississippi River and into Oklahoma.

Discussion Guide

Click here for a designed, downloadable PDF of the readers' guide.

1. Why do you think Mary Glickman chose to call the novel ?An Undisturbed Peace??

2. How do the names of parts one and two, ?Genesis? and ?Exodus,? contribute to our understanding of the novel?

3. How is the New World portrayed in Glickman?s novel? What can we gather about 19th-century America?

4. Mary Glickman chooses a narrative structure that is not temporally continuous. Even though the story begins in 1828, she depicts events that transpired decades before by having her characters tell their own stories. Why do you think she chose to construct a narrative that is as grounded in storytelling as in present action?

5. How do Abe?s motivations for action shift throughout the novel? Which characters cause Abe to change in the most

dramatic ways?

6. How does Abe?s relationship with Dark Water change over the course of the novel?

7. How are men and women portrayed in AN UNDISTURBED PEACE, and what are their different roles in each society?

8. How does Abe receive the Cherokee and their culture? How does his personal and historical context contribute to his perspective?

9. Why do you think Mary Glickman included the scenes of Abe in Washington? From the text, does Washington appear to be connected to the reality of its policies? How do discussions of the Indian Removal Act in Washington differ from what is happening in the South?

10. When Abe speaks or thinks about Dark Water, he is inconsistent in which name he uses. What is the significance of his use of her Christian name, Marian, over her given name and vice versa?

11. On page 264, Abe tells Dark Water that her pride is a large part of who she is. Do you think this is true? What role does pride play in the events that transpire for Dark Water and for Abe?

12. On page 124, the narrator describes how Abe changes his religious traditions while in America: ?For his own well-being, he went along with custom, tucking in his tzitzit, trading his yarmulke for a cap, and rarely declaring himself. Life was easier that way.? How does Abe?s Judaism affect his relationships with others in the novel? And what discoveries does he make about his identity as a Jew in America?

Enrichment

Get into the mood to discuss AN UNDISTURBED PEACE with the following books, documentaries, and food.

Books written in 1820s and 1830s

THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS, by James Fenimore Cooper (1826)
DAVID CUSICK?S SKETCHES OF ANCIENT HISTORY OF THE SIX NATIONS, by David Cusick (1828)
DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA, by Alexis de Tocqueville (1835)
NATURE, by Ralph Waldo Emerson (1836)

THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER, Edgar Allan Poe (1839)
NARRATIVE OF THE LIFE OF FREDERICK DOUGLASS, AN AMERICAN SLAVE, WRITTEN BY HIMSELF, by Frederick Douglass (1845)

Relevant Documentaries and Films

Trail of Tears: A Native American Documentary Collection (2010). This collection consists of four documentaries: *Trail of Tears: Cherokee Legacy* (2006), *Native American Healing in the 21st Century* (1997), *Black Indians: An American Story* (2000), and *Our Spirits Don?t Speak English: Indian Boarding School* (2008).
Slavery and the Making of America(2005). A series on the origins of slavery in the American continent. The four-part series spans over 200 years of history, shedding light on both the larger historical context and the lives of individual slaves.

The Jewish Americans (2008). Narrated by Liev Schreiber, this documentary takes viewers on 350-year journey from 1654 to the present day and focuses on the difficulty of maintaining Jewish identity amidst pressure to assimilate.

Recipe

Cooking was and is one of many parts of the traditional Cherokee woman?s role --- not just for sustainability and necessity, but for social and communal reasons, too. According to the Cherokee Nation?s official site, ?as a matrilineal society, it is the woman who carries the clan, she who gives nourishment to the growing infant by providing it with her milk. She continues to nourish all who come to her home by providing lovingly prepared food.? Yam cakes are a traditional Cherokee dish, characterized by the sweet and flavorful yams they?re baked with.

Cherokee Yam Cakes
Yields 16 Servings

Ingredients
1 cup mashed yams or sweet potatoes
2 cups sifted flour
1 1/2 tsp sugar
1 1/2 tsp salt
2 1/2 tsp baking powder
1/2 cup oil
1/2 cup milk

Method:

1. Sift flour, baking soda, sugar and salt into a bowl.
2. Pour oil and milk into a measuring cup, but do not stir.
3. Add yams, making sure to blend well.
4. Add to flour mixture and mix lightly with fork, until the mixture holds together.
5. Turn dough out onto a floured board and knead until smooth (about 12 kneading strokes)
6. Roll dough about 1/4 thick and cut into rounds with floured biscuit cutter.
7. Place rounds on a baking sheet.
8. Bake at 425º for 10-20 minutes.
9. Serve hot with butter and honey.

For more recipes check out:
Chiltoskey, Mary and Goingback. *CHEROKEE COOKLORE: To Make My Bread.* Mary and Goingback Chiltoskey, 1951.

Author Bio

Mary Glickmanwas born on the South Shore of Boston, Massachusetts, and studied at the Université de Lyon and Boston University. She now lives in Seabrook Island, South Carolina. Glickman is the author of HOME IN THE MORNING; ONE MORE RIVER, a National Jewish Book Award Finalist in Fiction; and MARCHING TO ZION.

Critical Praise

?Mary Glickman?s powerful new novel is the finest depiction of the infamous Trail of Tears that I?ve ever read. The forced removal of the Cherokee nation from its ancestral homeland in the southern Appalachia and its forced relocation in Oklahoma is one of the darkest and most fascinating dramas of a shameful American past. Glickman turns this to literature by her brilliant portrayal of three unforgettable characters. Their story is riveting, and Mary Glickman is a wonder.?

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