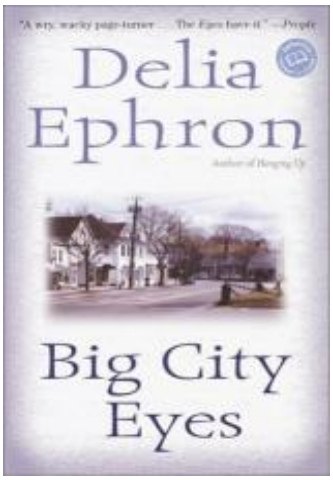
ReadingGroupGuides
The online community for reading groups

Big City Eyes

by Delia Ephron



About the Book

To keep her fifteen-year-old son safe from the everyday temptations of New York City-namely sex, drugs, and all-night clubs-single mom Lily Davis decides it's time she and Sam move to Sakonnet Bay, a picturesque town on the Long Island coast with a much slower pace. Or so she thinks.

For Sam makes a friend who speaks only in Klingon-and before you can say wejpuh, they're having sex on the kitchen table. Lily lands a great job as a columnist for the local paper, but the folks in town are gossiping about her run-in with a nipping dog and police sergeant Tom McKee. Most disturbing, there's the undeniable attraction between Lily and the very married McKee. And when she and Tom stumble upon what appears to be a dead woman in a house they're . . . well . . . trespassing in, Lily's picture-postcard world begins to peel at the edges. How much passion, guilt, and murder can one woman take?

Discussion Guide

1. How do Lily's "big city eyes" deceive her when she first arrives in Sakonnet Bay? How does her opinion of this sleepy village change over the course of the novel?

2. What do you think Lily's life was like in Manhattan? Do you think Sam is the only one who needs saving?

3. Lily finds the natural world around her threatening. Can you relate with her concerns and anxieties? What is your opinion of the vast night sky?

4. Lily is tortured by the fear that her son is a freak and she is to blame. How much responsibility do parents bear for their children's behavior? Where and how do you draw the line?

5. Lily tells Tom that she and Sam matter too much to each other. Do you think this is an accurate assessment?

6. Throughout the novel, Lily struggles over how to protect her son while still giving him space to grow. Do you think she manages to find some balance? For parents, when is it time to intervene?

7. Lily's life illustrates how difficult it can be to juggle single parenthood and romance. How does a woman (or man) balance the responsibilities of parenthood with her (or his) own emotional and sexual needs?

8. What is your opinion of how Lily handles the issue of Sam's sex life? What would your approach be?

9. Lily suffers from great guilt over the effect of her divorce on her son. Do you agree with her opinions regarding the impact of divorce on children?

10. How do you think Sam would respond to his mother's opinion that his parents' divorce broke his heart?

11. Do you think Lily gives us an accurate portrait of her ex-husband Allan? How do you think he would describe her?

12. Discuss the importance of an intact family versus the needs of individual members. How do you keep these in balance?

13. What effect does falling in love with others have on Lily and Sam's relationship?

14. What do you think of the character of Tom McKee? What do you think motivates him?

15. Discuss the motives behind the infidelity in this novel.

16. Did your opinion of Sam, trapped in the throes of teenage angst, change over the course of the novel?

17. Did you enjoy Lily's columns? Did you have a favorite among them?

18. Were you surprised by the identity of the murderer?

19. Besides Lily, which characters were your favorites and why?

20. One reviewer has remarked, "By presenting a wider set of obstacles and a detective who needs to find out more than just 'who done it,' Ephron's Big City Eyes lets the reader share a triumph wider than simply catching a killer." Do you agree? Do you find the mix of genres satisfying?

21. Do you think Lily made the right decision in the end? What would you do in her shoes?

22. How does your group decide what to read? Why did the group choose this book?

23. How does this novel compare with other works the group has read?

24. What is the group reading next?

Author Bio

Delia Ephron is a bestselling author, screenwriter, essayist and playwright. Her novels include the *New York Times* bestseller SIRACUSA and THE LION IS IN. She has written books of essays (SISTER MOTHER HUSBAND DOG (ETC.)), books of humor (HOW TO EAT LIKE A CHILD), and books for children and young adults. Her movie credits include *You?ve Got Mail*, *The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants*, *This is My Life*, *Michael* and *Hanging Up* (based on her novel). Her play, ?Love, Loss, and What I Wore,? written with her sister Nora Ephron (based on the book by Ilene Beckerman), ran for two years off Broadway and has been performed internationally.

Critical Praise

" [A] wry, inventive, glimmeringly intelligent book. "***--Scott Turow, The Washington Post Book World***

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