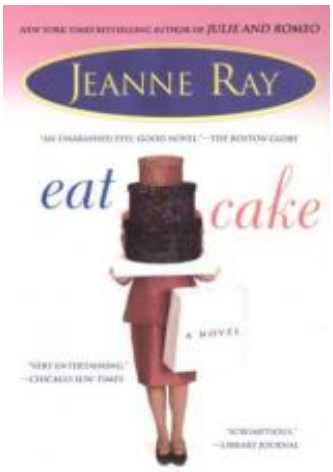
Eat Cake

by Jeanne Ray



About the Book

From the *New York Times* bestselling author of Step-Ball-Change and Julie and Romeo-now in trade paperback for the first time...

Ruth has always found baking cakes to be a source of relief from the stresses of life. And now-as her husband loses his job, her life-of-the-party father arrives for an extended stay (much to the dismay of her mother, who also moved in recently), and her teenage daughter perfects the art of sulking-Ruth is going to have to save the day. And let the crumbs fall where they may...

Discussion Guide

1. Ruth soothes her family conflicts with cake. Do you use food to soothe and comfort your family? In your particular case, is doing so more healthful or harmful?

2. The loss of Sam's job presents new challenges to his marriage with Ruth. Have you or your husband (or someone else close to you) ever suddenly lost their job? How did that affect your relationship(s)?

3. When the novel opens, Ruth's mother, Hollis, has moved in with Ruth's family because a robbery of her home, in which the door was kicked in, so destroyed her sense of security that she's no longer comfortable living alone. Many ordinary people are the victims of crime. Drawing from your own knowledge and experience, discuss what some of the long-term affects of non-violent crime might be, and how as a society we might or might not underestimate the impact of those experiences.

4. Florence Allen, a nurse, has a healing influence on several members of the Hopson family. Has someone from outside of your own family ever helped you out during a moment of crisis?

5. Camille is sometimes utterly self-absorbed, and at other times remarkably caring, confident, and capable. In fact, it's funny when she starts acting more responsible than her own parents! In what ways does Jeanne Ray's portrait of Camille jive with, or depart from, your own impressions of today's teenagers?

6. Once Ruth's cake baking business takes off, she's overwhelmed by the sudden need to fill all those orders. Have you ever been in a situation when success took you by surprise, and at first you didn't know how you would cope?

7. Do you think that we as a society need to take more time to figuratively "bake cakes"? How might you make more room in your own life for the small but significant pleasures that make life worth living?

8. Do you like the way the book ends? Did Amy make the right choice? How do you see Amy's and Nick's futures unfolding?

9. Do you have a dream that you secretly long to pursue? Would you like to share it with the group, and discuss what might be holding you back from going after it?

10. Have you tried the cake recipes in the back of the book? How did they turn out, and what response did you receive?

Author Bio

Jeanne Rayworks as a registered nurse at the Frist Clinic in Nashville, Tennessee. She is married and has two daughters. Together, she and her husband have ten grandchildren. She is the author of **Julie and Romeo**, **Step-Ball-Change**, and **Eat Cake**.

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