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Hangover Soup

by Louise Redd



About the Book

Faith met Jay in college, "where it's hard to tell who's a true alcoholic and who's not." Five years later they're living in Austin, where Faith tutors and Jay works as a sweet talkin' deejay at the local radio station, and where the gin and tonics finally drive them apart. Jay's pledge to go on the wagon brings Faith back, but their reunion brings consequences that reach far beyond their own troubled marriage. As fall-down funny as it is slyly wise, **Hangover Soup** chronicles one woman's struggle to save her marriage, to sober up her husband, and to find her true self.

Discussion Guide

1. What are Faith's intentions when she leaves Jay in the novel's first chapter?

2. Discuss Faith's relationship with the athletes she tutors. Does her job satisfy her in ways that her marriage does not? Does her job hold some of the same frustrations as her marriage?

3. Why does Claire, Faith's mother, garden? Why does Faith resent her mother's love of gardening?

4. Faith's friend Darrah has a poor opinion of Jay and held out little hope that his "High on Wife" marathon would last. What did you think of her "tough love" kind of support? Was her frankness in fact helpful to Faith?

5. Discuss Faith's sexual encounter with Heinz and the ways in which this one night affects the course of her life.

6. If alcohol were a woman, Faith tells us, Jay wouldn't be able to keep his hands off of her. In this sense, is it possible to compare Faith's affair with Jay's?

7. Faith thinks of Texas as a place particularly conducive to heavy drinking. Do you think Jay would have cultivated the

same habits in any setting?

8. At one point Faith thinks to herself, "I shut my mouth tight and closed my eyes, as if to keep this secret locked in my head: sometimes we had fun when he was drunk." How do you know when your partner's drinking has crossed the line from "fun" to problematic? Have you known an alcoholic who resembled Jay?

9. How is Faith able to continue loving Jay after the accident?

10. At one point when Faith visits Jay in prison, he asks her, "Buddy, is it too much for you? Do you want out?" and she tells him no, "I want in." Would your response have been the same?

11. Discuss Faith's relationship with Richard Jamison. Did you expect their friendship to develop into a romantic relationship? Are his actions understandable given the basis of their relationship?

12. Discuss Faith's reconciliation with her mother near the end of the book. Have the events of the novel changed Faith's perception of her mother? Has Claire's style of mothering changed?

13. What do you predict for Faith and Jay beyond the novel's ending?

Author Bio

Louise Redd is a graduate of Johns Hopkins University and the University of Houston, where she earned a master's degree in creative writing. She is the author of one other novel, **Playing the Bones**. She grew up in Texas and now lives in Telluride, Colorado.

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