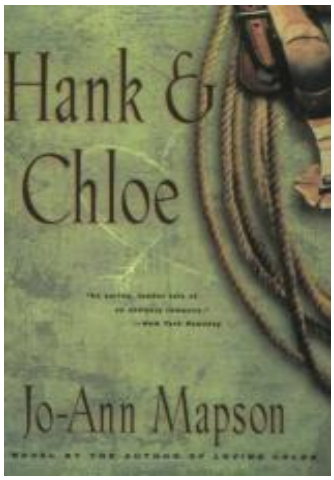
Hank and Chloe

by Jo-Ann Mapson



About the Book

Set amid the sprawling suburbs and the wild canyons of Southern California, *Hank & Chloe* is the story of a pair of seemingly mismatched lovers: he, a solitary scholar from a staid family; she, a former foster child eking out a marginal existence.

Chloe Morgan, full-time waitress and part-time horse trainer, is called to help a mare through a troubled labor. Despite Chloe's efforts and the ministrations of the vet she calls, the mare dies. The horse's owner takes Chloe to his community college office, where she borrows a shirt from another professor, Henry "Hank" Oliver. This encounter is the beginning of the unlikely relationship between rough, independent Chloe and reserved, settled Hank.

When Hank visits Chloe's home, a shack in a squatter's community, she takes him into her arms--and, more reluctantly, into her life. Shortly after Hank and Chloe begin their relationship, Chloe's home is raided. She is injured and arrested, and her beloved dog Hannah runs off. Hank hires a lawyer and brings Chloe to live with him while she recovers. As the novel chronicles Hank and Chloe's relationship, it explores love in its myriad forms, including the pair's unresolved relationships from the past and a brooding passion for the besieged landscape.

Discussion Guide

1. On the first page of the novel, Chloe answers the door to her home, which is a shack in a squatter community populated with illegal aliens and owned by a landlord resisting pressure to sell his land to developers. What battles are waged in the book over this "last frontier"? How is the land an integral part of the novel?

2. In the second chapter, Hank teaches his class the story of two lovers, Eurydice and Orpheus. From classical mythology we know that when Eurydice died, Orpheus followed her to the underworld to ask Hades for her return. Hades agreed, on the condition that Orpheus walk ahead of Eurydice and not look back at her until they reached the

earth. At the last minute Orpheus looked back and Eurydice vanished. How is this story paralleled in Hank and Chloe? Do other elements of folklore in the book have echoes in the story?

3. Ghosts, both literal and figurative, haunt the characters of this story. Hank mourns his dead sister, "the small pink ghost he got to see grow up." Chloe hears voices in the desert belonging to "people who had died long before, whose very lives had been erased by time and progress, but who weren't quite done speaking their piece." What do these and other specters from the past have to do with the present action of the story? What part do they play in all of our lives?

4. Mothers are in short supply in this novel. As the story opens, Chloe helps to deliver a foal from a dying mare. Chloe and her young friend Kit were both abandoned by their mothers. Though Hank's mother is alive, she emotionally abandoned him when his sister died. How are the characters of this novel affected by the absence of their mothers? Do they come to any resolution with their loss?

5. Chloe trains horses and teaches riding. How is she like the horses she knows so well?

Author Bio

Jo-Ann Mapson is the author of five previous novels, including the bestselling THE WILDER SISTERS and BLUE RODEO, which was made into a CBS-TV movie starring Kris Kristofferson and Ann-Margret. She lives in south-central Alaska. BAD GIRL is an alternate selection of the Literary Guild, Doubleday Book Club, and Book-of-the-Month Club. OWEN'S DAUGHTER, her latest novel, will be released in July.

Hank and Chloe
by Jo-Ann Mapson

Publication Date: April 8, 1994
Paperback: 320 pages
Publisher: Harper Perennial
ISBN-10: 0060924640
ISBN-13: 9780060924645