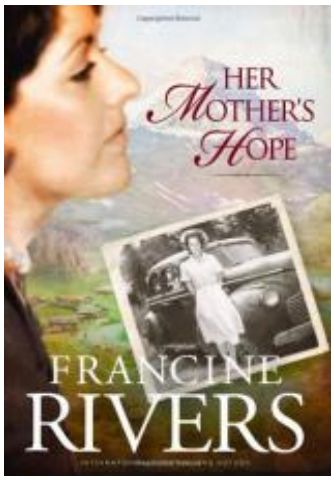
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Her Mother's Hope: Marta's Legacy, Book One

by Francine Rivers



About the Book

The first in an epic two-book saga by beloved author Francine Rivers, this sweeping story explores the complicated relationships between mothers and daughters over several generations. Near the turn of the 20th century, fiery Marta leaves Switzerland determined to find life on her own terms. Her journey takes her through Europe and finally lands her with children and husband in tow in the central valley of California. Marta?s experiences convince her that only the strong survive. Hildie, Marta?s oldest daughter, has a heart to serve others, and her calling as a nurse gives her independence, if not the respect of her mother. Amid the drama of WWII, Hildie marries and begins a family of her own. She wants her daughter never to doubt her love --- but the challenges of life conspire against her vow. Each woman is forced to confront her faulty but well-meaning desire to help her daughter find her God-given place in the world.

Discussion Guide

1. Marta certainly had a difficult childhood. What factors do you think shaped her the most, for better or worse? How do you see those influences shape the woman she becomes?

2. How does Marta?s father shape her early beliefs about God and His expectations of her? Contrast that with the way her mama talks about God. Look at Marta?s prayer. What seems to make the biggest impression on the way Marta views God? Do you see that change throughout the story? If so, what causes that change?

3. Marta?s mother gave her a blessing when she left home to make her way in the world. In what ways, verbal or otherwise, did your parents give you their blessing? If they didn?t, what do you wish they had said to you? In what ways did you --- or do you hope to someday --- do the same for your own children?

4. It has been said that women often marry a version of their father. How is Niclas like or unlike Marta?s father?

5. Marta has a hard time trusting Niclas because of the way her father treated her mother. How do you think that made Niclas feel? How was he able to love Marta despite her sometimes prickly nature? In what ways --- good or bad --- has your family of origin affected your marriage or close friendships?

6. Do you feel like it was right for Niclas to ask Marta to sell the boarding house and move to Manitoba with him? Why was it so difficult for her? What did the boardinghouse represent for her? If you were Marta, what would you have done in that situation?

7. Do you think Marta hijacked Niclas?s role as head of their household? In what ways was Niclas both passive and aggressive? Did Marta view herself as a ?helpmate? to Niclas, and do you think he saw her in that way?

8. Why do you think Marta never told Niclas --- or anyone else in her family --- that she loved them? How do you think Marta best showed and received love?

9. In many ways, Marta is like the woman described in Proverbs 31. Which of the qualities described in that passage do you see in her? Which ones do you not see?

10. Marta sometimes showed that she harbored resentment toward Niclas. Was it fair?

11. After rescuing Elise from the Meyers, Marta tells her friend, ?I swear before God, Rosie, if I?m ever fortunate enough to have a daughter, I?ll make sure she?s strong enough to stand up for herself!? How do you see Marta?s family dynamics come into play later in life when she has children of her own? Hilde isn?t her only daughter, so why do you think Marta treats her differently?

12. Do you think that parents often favor one child over another? Is it always wrong? Is treating children differently the same as favoring one over another? Is it possible to raise all the kids in a family exactly the same?

13. Marta loves Hildemara deeply. Yet of all her children, Hildemara probably feels the least loved. Given who Marta was and the time in which she lived, could she have made different choices? If you could sit down with Marta and Hildemara, what would you like to tell each of them?

14. Is there someone you love, as Marta loved Hildemara, who seems unaware or disbelieving of your love? What might you do to try to change that perception?

15. Have you ever felt, as Hildemara did, that others in your family have unfairly received a greater share of love, financial provision, or some other valuable resource? How did you respond? What advice would you give someone in this situation?

16. After the Hildemara?s incident with Mrs. Ransom, Hildemara told her father that she prayed and prayed, but her prayers didn?t change the situation. Niclas replied, ?Prayers changed you, Hildemara.? What did he mean by that? Have you ever had a similar experience?

17. Why do you think that Marta was so averse to Hildemara?s decision to attend nursing school? Does she ever change her mind about Hildemara?s chosen profession?

18. For several months, Hildemara kept Trip at arm?s length. Why do you think she did that? What made her finally admit her love for him?

19. Trip, like many men of his generation, had tragic, life-altering experiences in World War II. Have you heard stories from or about men in your own family who were similarly affected? Have any of your loved ones been involved in more recent wars? How has war affected your family?

20. Tuberculosis is much rarer today than it was in Marta?s and Hildemara?s lifetimes. Yet life-threatening and chronic illnesses have never been more prevalent. How has your family been impacted by serious illness? Discuss the strain illness can place on family dynamics, regardless of the ?relational health? a family may have at the outset.

21. At the end of this book Marta is determined, with God?s help, to make a fresh start with Hildemara. Do you think she will succeed? Why or why not? How do you think Hildemara will respond? Is there hope for this relationship?

22. If you could change one thing about the way you were parented, what would it be? And if you have children, is there anything you would change about the way you?ve parented them thus far?

Author Bio

International bestselling author Francine Rivers had a successful writing career in the general market for several years becoming a born-again Christian; she then wrote REDEEMING LOVE as her statement of faith. A retelling of the biblical story of Gomer and Hosea set during the time of the California Gold Rush, REDEEMING LOVE is now considered by many to be a classic work of Christian fiction and it continues to be one of the industry?s top-selling titles year after year.

Since REDEEMING LOVE, Francine has published numerous bestselling novels with Christian themes --- including THE MASTERPIECE, BRIDGE TO HAVEN and A VOICE IN THE WIND --- and she has continued to win both industry acclaim and reader loyalty around the world. Her Christian novels have been awarded or nominated for numerous honors and in 1997, after winning her third RITA Award for Inspirational Fiction, Francine was inducted into the Romance Writers of America?s Hall of Fame. In 2015, she received the Lifetime Achievement Award from American Christian Fiction Writers (ACFW). Francine?s novels have been translated into over 30 different languages, and she enjoys bestseller status in many foreign countries.

Francine and her husband live in Northern California and enjoy time spent with their grown children and grandchildren. She uses her writing to draw closer to the Lord, and she desires that through her work she might worship and praise Jesus for all He has done and is doing in her life.

Critical Praise

"Dramatic, engaging. This well-told tale will have readers eagerly awaiting the story's resolution."

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