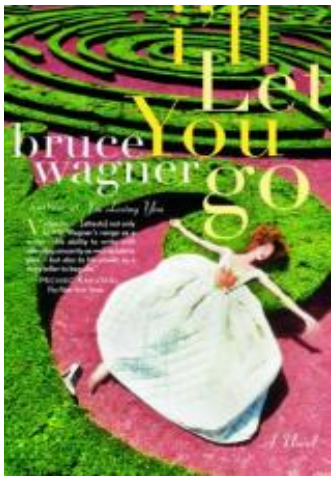
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I'll Let You Go: A Novel

by Bruce Walker



About the Book

Twelve-year-old Toulouse "Tull" Trotter lives on his grandfather's vast Bel-Air parkland estate with his mother, the beautiful, drug-addicted Katrina?a landscape artist who specializes in topiary labyrinths. He spends most of his time with young cousins Lucy, "the girl detective," and Edward, a prodigy undaunted by the disfiguring effects of Apert Syndrome. One day, an impulsive revelation by Lucy sets in motion a chain of events that changes Tull?and the Trotter family?forever.

In this latter-day Thousand and One Nights, a boy seeks his lost father and a woman finds her long-lost love . . . while a family of unimaginable wealth learns that its fate is bound up with two fugitives: Amaryllis, a street orphan who aspires to be a saint, and her protector, a homeless schizophrenic, clad in Victorian rags, who is accused of a horrifying crime.

Discussion Guide

1. Toulouse ("Tull") Trotter's glamorous mother, Trinnie, more or less abandons him to the (luxurious) care of her wealthy parents. I'll Let You Go suggests that she became unhinged when her husband, a schizophrenic, vanished on their wedding night. Do you think Trinnie would have led a life of drugs and dissolution if that hadn't happened? Or did his act simply "allow" for the selfish behavior she was prone to?

2. Why is Tull's grandfather Louis obsessed with having the proper monument designed for his own burial? Discuss the ironies of Louis Aherne Trotter's gravesite remaining forever "unbuilt."

3. In I'll Let You Go, two worlds ? those of the rich and dispossessed ? are sharply delineated. The children from both societies first converge on a movie set. Why is that significant?

4. Why do you think the orphan, Amaryllis Kornfeld, is so obsessed with becoming a saint? Discuss the brutalization she

endured under her mother, and the late revelation that her father was in jail but did not wish to see her.

5. Will'm (AKA Topsy AKA Marcus) is first revealed as a homeless man and protector of the orphan Amaryllis. He represents the broken bridge between the mansions of Beverly Hills and the homeless encampments of downtown L.A. Discuss schizophrenia and the commingling of identities: William Morris, the legendary show business agent vs. William Morris, the legendary Victorian designer.

6. Lucille Trotter, Tull's first cousin, is someone who Tull is both attracted to and repelled by. It is significant that she is actually the one who sets in motion Tull's search for his father. Discuss the cruel way in which she informs him that his father is still allive; and the guilt she feels over it, ultimately compelling her to become Tull's advocate in the search.

7. The Trotter children ? Lucille, Edward and Tull ? don't seem to have been damaged by the great privilege they were born into; nor does Amaryllis's spirit appear vanquished by her enormous poverty and hardships. To what extent do you think a child can triumph over his circumstances?

8. Edward's mother, Joyce, is contemptuous of Trinnie for having abandoned her son; yet herself feels tremendous guilt over a kind of abandonment of Edward because of his physical defects. Discuss why Joyce becomes involved with giving anonymous Dumpster babies names and proper burials ? and yet cannot seem to overcome her feelings toward her own son, until it is too late.

9. Pullman, the Great Dane, plays an almost magical role in I'll Let You Go. In fact, near the end of the book it is suggested that he, unlike most dogs of his breed, was ageless. Discuss why the author never reveals his death, instead suggesting he simply "moved on."

10. Tull's grandmother Bluey slowly succumbs to dementia. Was her "hobby" of collecting obituaries and pasting them in scrap albums a harbinger of her own death? Discuss how it was that Bluey came to envision her own obituary among those very pages.

11. Edward's billionaire uncle Dodd took an amazing revenge upon his grade school alma mater. Discuss what it was that enraged Dodd so ? and if the details of what happened to him (or what didn't) is, perhaps, the worst kind of punishment a person can endure.

12. Lani Mott, the wife of the baker Gilles, gives lip service to helping children ? until forced by circumstance to come to the aid of Amaryllis. There's a triumphant scene where she acquires the orphan's psychiatric records from an arrogant psychiatrist. Discuss Lani's feelings of elation and empowerment, and how they lead her to the decision to adopt.

13. Gilles, the baker, has to overcome initial suspicions that his old friend, the vagrant Will'm AKA Topsy, has been involved in more than one heinous crime. Discuss his wife's Lani's absolute resolve that Topsy is innocent ? her intuition ? vs. Gilles' seemingly unlikely reticence.

14. The deaf-mute martyr Jane Scull plays an important role in rescuing Amaryllis from a lurid foster home, where Jane worked and was raped. Jane gives birth to a child who winds up in the Trotter fold. Discuss Jane's relationship with Will'm, and the manner in which she dies ? having killed her assailant.

15. Was Will'm better off when he became Marcus Weiner again? And is Will'm's ending a "happy one"? He does not undergo what might be considered a traditional recovery, yet seems quite content. Discuss his fate, and why Wagner was insistent on employing a narrator who spoke of I'll Let You Go's events with a wry, Victorian lilt.

Author Bio

Bruce Wagner is the author of the novels **Force Majeure** and **I'm Losing You**. He recently wrote and directed *Women in Film*, adapted from his novel **I'm Losing You**. *Women in Film* was shown at the Sundance and Venice film festivals in 2001. He lives in Los Angeles.

Critical Praise

"A brash authorial voice . . . tinged with melancholy . . . a sincere exploration of life, death and immortality."

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