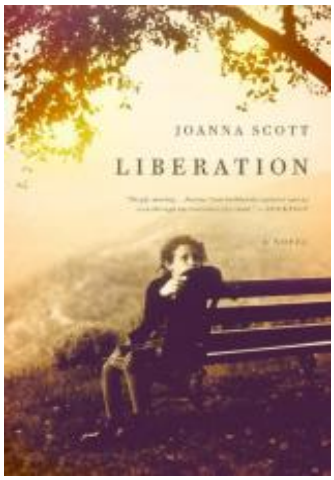
Liberation

by Joanna Scott



About the Book

It is the night of June 17, 1944, on the island of Elba, and a young girl is locked in a kitchen cabinet, hiding from the war. The liberation has been set in motion. Soon the German occupation will be over and the Elbans will be free. But while history marches on, memory circles back, returning again and again to the experiences that remain unresolved and yet define us.

The young girl who spends the first night of the liberation hiding in a cabinet is Adriana Nardi. Sixty years later she has become Mrs. Rundel, who, as she rides a train through the landscape of suburban New Jersey, won't let herself forget the terror of war. She remembers the sounds of battle. She remembers her childish confusion. And she remembers, as she has many times before, a Senegalese soldier named Amdu, who came to her for refuge.

On the train to New York, Mrs. Rundel's effort to remember is threatened by the physical force of illness. Caught in the perilous divide between life and death, Mrs. Rundel is both a woman struggling to catch her breath and a young girl struggling to survive the violence of the liberation. As Adriana Nardi, she risks her own safety and the safety of her family to help Amdu, a solitary soldier who aspires to be nothing less than a modern-day saint. While Amdu can't stop the war, he can hold Adriana's attention. Together they experience what will take a lifetime to understand: the everlasting innocence of first love.

With the mastery and elegance that have made all of Joanna Scott's novels celebrated literary events, Liberation is a story of war and love and memory's redemptive power.

Discussion Guide

1. Liberation shifts in perspective between Adriana in the present day as an old woman and Adriana in Italy as young girl. Which perspective made the strongest first impression on you? Did each incarnation help you to more fully

understand the other?

2. Liberation largely takes place during World War II and documents the destructive power and reality of armed conflict. What, for you, was the most difficult moment in the book?

3. Discuss the character of Amdu in the novel. Ultimately, in what ways does he affect Adriana?s life and her outlook?

4. Discuss the role of friendship in the novel. Which example of friendship for you was the strongest? How is loyalty viewed in the novel compared to friendship?

5. In **Liberation**, the author returns to the Italian island setting of Elba, also the setting for her previous novel Tourmaline. Discuss the setting of Elba as a character in this novel and what the island means to Adriana.

6. Early on the author writes Adrianna ?remembers wanting to stop believing everything she was told? (p. 10). Ultimately, what is more important for the characters in the novel: the suspension of belief or the ability to continue to do so?

7. In what ways are the settings of modern America and mid-century Italy different? How is America viewed in the novel?

8. Discuss the relationship of Amdu and Adriana. Do you think their relationship would be the same if they met under different circumstances?

Author Bio

Joanna Scott is the author of 10 books, including THE MANIKIN, which was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize; VARIOUS ANTIDOTES and ARROGANCE, which were both finalists for the PEN/Faulkner Award; and the critically acclaimed MAKE BELIEVE, TOURMALINE, LIBERATION and FOLLOW ME. She is a recipient of a MacArthur Fellowship, a Guggenheim Fellowship and a Lannan Award.

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