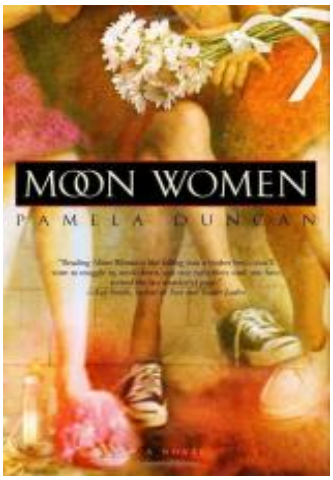
# Moon Women

by Pamela Duncan




## About the Book

In the lush North Carolina foothills, the Moon women have put down roots: matriarch Marvelle Moon, who's losing her grip on the world after more than eighty years of life; her daughters, Ruth Ann and Cassandra; and Ruth Ann's nineteen-year-old daughter, Ashley, fresh out of rehab, unmarried, and three months pregnant. Despite Ruth Ann's best efforts to live a life that's all her own, her family is coming together around her. Marvelle and Ashley need a place to live and Ruth Ann is unable to turn them away; and her womanizing ex-husband has been coming around again, dredging up the past. Now a flurry of outbursts, emotions, and outrages is shattering Ruth Ann's separate peace.

For here is Ashley, who has spent nineteen years running furiously away from home, now finding herself on a strange journey with her unraveling grandmother. And here is Cassandra, protected by layers of obesity and loneliness, wondering how to put magic back in her life. And Marvelle, slowly losing touch with reality, privately contemplating the story of her life and the secret that would change everything for everyone--if they only knew.... By turns fierce and tender, harrowing and heartbreaking, **Moon Women** resonates with emotional power, holding us captive under its beguiling spell.

## Discussion Guide

**1.** Moon is a fairly common name in the North Carolina hills where the book is set. Nonetheless, do you think Pamela Duncan's choice of the name for her characters has other significance? If so, what is there about the behavior and personalities of Marvelle, Ruth Ann, Cassandra and Ashley that are associated with their name?

**2.** At the center of the book are the female characters. The men in the story orbit around the women. Do the Moon women seem to follow a pattern in their choices of men: Jesse, A.J., Keith, and Lance?

**3.** We see both Marvelle and Ruth Ann as wife, sister, mother and grandmother. How are the two women similar or

different in these relationships? If Ruth Ann relates to her family in ways that are different from Marvelle's, do you think it's a conscious decision? What, if anything, do you think she has learned from her mother?

**4.** By the end of the book, each one of the Moon women has changed. Whether she's gained insight, made peace with the past, made peace with other members of her family, found the resolve to pursue a dream, each has been transformed. What are the ways in which the four main female characters change over the course of the story?

## Author Bio

Pamela Duncan was born in Asheville in 1961 and raised in Black Mountain, Swannanoa, and Shelby, North Carolina. She holds a B.A. in journalism from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and an M.A. in English and creative writing from North Carolina Sate University in Raleigh. She lives in Graham, North Carolina.

## Critical Praise

"Genuinely poignant...alternately funny and touching and sad."

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