Once a Midwife: A Hope River Novel

by Patricia Harman



About the Book

Welcome back to Hope River in *New York Times* bestselling author Patricia Harman?s newest novel as midwife Patience Hester, along with her family and friends, face the challenges of the home front during World War II.

The women of Hope River trust midwife Patience Hester, whose skill in delivering babies is known for miles around. But though the Great Depression is behind them, troubles are not, for Europe is at war?and it can only be a matter of time before the U.S. enters the fray.

And while some are eager to join the fight, Patience?s husband, Daniel, is not. Daniel is a patriot --- but he saw too much bloodshed during the First World War, and has vowed never to take up arms again.

His stance leaves Patience and their four children vulnerable --- to the neighbors who might judge them, and to the government, who imprison Daniel for his beliefs.

Patience must support their family and fight for her husband?s release despite her own misgivings. And with need greater than ever, she must also keep her practice running during this tumultuous time?relying on generous friends, like Bitsy, who has returned to Hope River, stalwart neighbors and her own indomitable strength to see them all through.

Discussion Guide

1. When Patience is reunited with Bitsy after nearly a decade she thinks, ?Have you ever noticed that when you?re reunited with an old friend, someone you?ve been through hard times with, it?s like you?ve never been apart?? Discuss times in your life where this has been true, or not true.

2. How did you feel about Daniel and his refusal to fight? Do you think his feelings were justified? Why or why not?

Our history books tend not to talk about the conscientious objectors in World War II; why do you think this is?

3. It?s difficult for us today to face the suspicion and hatred citizens of the United States felt for the Japanese at the time. In what ways does the novel address this?

4. Daniel and Patience both try to live life as usual: Daniel with his vet practice and Patience with her midwifery practice. Is this realistic in a time of war, even on the home front? Why or why not?

5. Were you surprised at how the community for the most part accepts Bitsy?s ?adoption? of Willie and her marriage to Lou?

6. We may think of opioid addiction as a modern-day issue, but it?s clear that Daisy is a drug addict. Did this surprise you? What other situations in the novel strike a chord similar to modern-day events? Even though decades have passed, have people and their situations essentially changed from the 1940s to now?

7. Have you ever taken an unpopular position in a group? Maybe you felt strongly that something was unfair or wrong and though you were nervous or scared you had to speak up. What were the results? Can you share the story?

8. At the novel?s end, Daniel tells Patience it?s their job to ?be happy and to love.? In what ways is this possible during a time of war? What do you think might be next for Patience, Daniel and their children?

Author Bio

Patricia Harman, CNM, got her start as a lay midwife on rural communes and went on to become a nurse-midwife on the faculties of Ohio State University, Case Western Reserve University, and West Virginia University. She is the author of two acclaimed memoirs and four novels: THE MIDWIFE OF HOPE RIVER, THE RELUCTANT MIDWIFE, THE RUNAWAY MIDWIFE and ONCE A MIDWIFE. She has three sons and lives near Morgantown, West Virginia.

Once a Midwife: A Hope River Novel
by Patricia Harman

Publication Date: November 6, 2018
Genres: Fiction, Historical Fiction, Women's Fiction
Paperback: 512 pages
Publisher: William Morrow Paperbacks
ISBN-10: 0062825577
ISBN-13: 9780062825575