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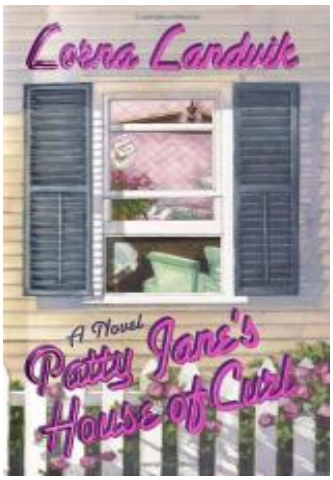
# Patty Jane's House of Curl

by Lorna Landvik




## About the Book

Maybe Patty Jane Dobbin should know better than to marry a man as gorgeous as Thor Rolvaag, but she's too smitten to think twice. Yet nine months into their marriage, with a baby on the way, Thor is gone. It's a good thing Patty Jane has her irrepressible sister Harriet to rely on--not to mention her extremely short, extremely rich almost-brother-in-law, Avel Ames.

It's been said that a good haircut can cure any number of ills, and before long the Minnesota sisters have opened a neighborhood beauty parlor complete with live harp music and an endless supply of delicious Norwegian baked goods. It's a wonderful, warm-hearted place where you can count on good friends, lots of laughter, tears, and comfort when you need it--and the unmistakable scent of someone getting a permanent wave. . . .

## Discussion Guide

**1.** What kind of childhood did Patty Jane and Harriet have? How has their childhood affected the course of their adult lives?

**2.** Why is Thor terrified by his impending fatherhood? Do you think he was really ready to embrace it before he disappeared?

**3.** The private investigator hired to track Thor down remarks that the good-looking never seem to have close friends. What do you think of this statement? Is there any merit in it?

**4.** Why does Patty Jane refuse anesthesia when she is in labor? Discuss the various reactions to her behavior during labor.

**5.** How would you describe the family that Patty Jane and Harriet create for themselves? Discuss the families that we are

born into and the ones we create.

**6.** How do Ione and Patty Jane navigate the dangerous currents in their relationship? Do you think you could do the same in a similar situation? Would you want to?

**7.** The characters in this novel use Patty Jane's House of Curl as a place to unburden themselves. What other places might people go to share their problems? Would you like to spend some time at the House of Curl? Or do you already have a House of Curl in your life?

**8.** Why do you think Avel's sisters hate him so much?

**9.** What do you think provoked Esme Ames's change of heart? Discuss how it can take a loss to make people value what they have as opposed to what they do not have.

**10.** Harriet says that "too much thought scared her, that she was happier doing than thinking." Why do you think she feels this way? Do you agree?

**11.** Harriet's decision to face the ghosts from her past almost costs her her life. What do you think separates those who hurt themselves in the face of great pain from those who are able to channel their demons more constructively?

**12.** Why does Patty Jane finally let Harriet go down the dangerous path she has chosen? What does it cost each of them? Do you think Patty Jane made the right deci-sion by letting go?

**13.** Why does it take Patty Jane and Clyde so long to get together? What are the obstacles in their path?

**14.** Did the explanation of Thor's disappearance surprise you?

**15.** In what ways do the rest of the characters underesti-mate the Thor who returns to them? Do you think he understands what has happened to him?

**16.** What frees Ione to finally begin the traveling she waited her whole life to do? Discuss the dangers of using other people's needs to avoid addressing your own.

**17.** Discuss the varied reactions to Harriet's illness by her family and friends. Is there a "right" way to respond to such news?

**18.** Why doesn't Patty Jane ever divorce Thor?

**19. "What a big chunk of God is to be found by looking into the face of someone you love!" Discuss the signifi-cance of this statement--both the good and the bad.**

20. "Honey, life can be a ballroom dance and it can be full of shit. Your job in both cases is to watch where you step." These are the words to live by that Patty Jane imparts to her daughter. Do you agree with this state-ment? If you had to boil down your own philosophy of life into one sentence, how would it read?

21. Are there any characters you would like to have heard more (or less) from? Why or why not?

22. If you could ask the author a question of your own, what would it be?

23. How does your group decide what to read? What are you reading next?

## Author Bio

Lorna Landvik is the author of 12 novels, including the bestselling PATTY JANE'S HOUSE OF CURL, ANGRY HOUSEWIVES EATING BON BONS, OH MY STARS and the recently published LAST CIRCLE OF LOVE.

Landvik's checkered (but legal) past includes working as a chambermaid in Bavaria, winning a trip to Tahiti as a contestant on "The $25,000 Pyramid" (MacGyver was her partner), temping at the Playboy Mansion (it was strictly a clerical position), and walking across the country as a member of The Great Peace March.

She has acted in many theatrical productions, including a half dozen shows she conveniently wrote for herself. Her all-improvised show, PARTY IN THE REC ROOM, is a local legend, due in no small part to the margaritas she mixes up onstage.

She has one husband and two daughters and lives in the beautiful blue and green state of Minnesota.

## Critical Praise

"A funny, poignant first novel about the bonds between women."

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**Patty Jane's House of Curl**
by Lorna Landvik

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