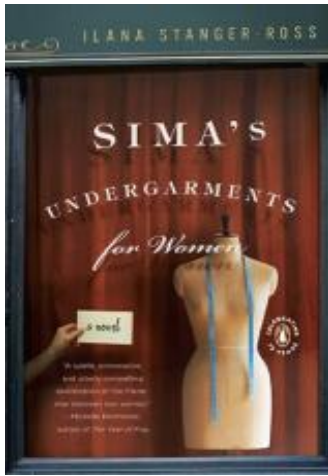


Sima's Undergarments for Women

by Ilana Stanger-Ross



About the Book

In the basement of her Brooklyn apartment, Sima Goldner welcomes women of all shapes and sizes with warmth, acceptance-and a bra that gives them the support and lift they need. But Sima, regrettably childless at 60, and harboring a secret that has embittered her marriage, can't seem to do the same for herself. Then Timna, a young Israeli with enviable cleavage, arrives in search of a demi-cup and stays on to become the shop's seamstress. As they laugh, gossip, and sell lingerie, Sima finds herself awakening to hope and the possibility of happiness in this beguiling story of New York's underground sisterhood, and one woman's second chance.

Discussion Guide

1. Beyond undergarments, what does Sima's shop provide her community? What does it provide her? Is she aware of this?
2. For thirty-five years, Sima's seen a range of women's shapes and sizes in her store and because of this, she is far more accepting of women's varied body types. Do you think women have more body anxiety than men? Why? Do you have any fears or concerns about your own body image? If so, how do you confront them?
3. Sima believes that good-fitting bras are the foundation of a good outfit. What item of clothing do you think is indispensable? What item do you think is impossible to find in a perfect fit?
4. Not having children created a deep rift in Sima and Lev's relationship. Did you feel any sympathy for either of them? If so, who and why? Is Sima and Lev's marriage worth saving?

5. Sima, Timna, Lev, and Connie all suffer romantic disappointments. In what ways are their heartaches similar? How do they cope?
6. Should Sima have revealed Art's secret to Connie? What would you have done if you were in her position?
7. Compare Sima's relationship with Connie and her relationship with Timna. How do these friendships develop over the course of the novel?
8. Of all of Sima's worries about Timna-heartbreak, infidelity, pregnancy-which, if any, do you believe were founded?
9. Why did Sima keep her secret from Lev for such a long time? Should she have told him sooner? If she did, how do you think he would have reacted?
10. What do Timna and Sima learn from each other? What is Timna's greatest strength? What is Sima's? Do you have a friend who inspires or teaches you?

Author Bio

Originally from Brooklyn, Ilana Stanger-Ross is currently a midwifery student at the University of British Columbia. She lives in Victoria, BC with her husband, Jordan Stanger-Ross, and two young daughters, Eva and Tillie.

Ilana earned her Masters in Fiction from Temple University in Philadelphia, where she held a University Fellowship. She has been awarded numerous grants, including ones from the Leeway Foundation, the Toronto Arts Council, the Ontario Arts Council, the Barbara Deming Memorial/Money for Women Fund, and the Humber College Summer Writer's Workshop, as well as a Ragdale Foundation residency.

A graduate of Columbia University's Barnard College, Stanger-Ross's fiction has been published in *The Bellevue Review*, *Lilith Magazine*, and online at KillingtheBuddha.com; her non-fiction has appeared in *The Globe and Mail*, *The Walrus Magazine*, & *The Literary Review of Canada*.

SIMA'S UNDERGARMENTS FOR WOMEN is her first novel.

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