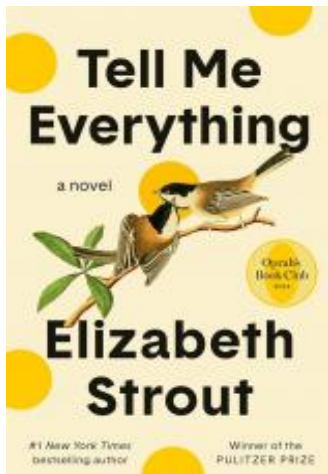


Tell Me Everything

by Elizabeth Strout



About the Book

From Pulitzer Prize-winning author Elizabeth Strout comes a hopeful, healing novel about new friendships, old loves and the very human desire to leave a mark on the world.

With her “extraordinary capacity for radical empathy” (*The Boston Globe*), remarkable insight into the human condition and silences that contain multitudes, Elizabeth Strout returns to the town of Crosby, Maine, and to her beloved cast of characters --- Lucy Barton, Olive Kitteridge, Bob Burgess and more --- as they deal with a shocking crime in their midst, fall in love, and yet choose to be apart and grapple with the question, as Lucy Barton puts it, “What does anyone’s life mean?”

It’s autumn in Maine, and the town lawyer Bob Burgess has become enmeshed in an unfolding murder investigation, defending a lonely, isolated man accused of killing his mother. He also has fallen into a deep and abiding friendship with the acclaimed writer Lucy Barton, who lives down the road in a house by the sea with her ex-husband, William. Together, Lucy and Bob go on walks and talk about their lives, their fears and regrets, and what might have been. Lucy, meanwhile, is finally introduced to the iconic Olive Kitteridge, now living in a retirement community on the edge of town. They spend afternoons together in Olive’s apartment, telling each other stories. Stories about people they have known --- “unrecorded lives,” Olive calls them --- reanimating them, and, in the process, imbuing their lives with meaning.

Brimming with empathy and pathos, TELL ME EVERYTHING is Elizabeth Strout operating at the height of her powers, illuminating the ways in which our relationships keep us afloat. As Lucy says, “Love comes in so many different forms, but it is always love.”

Discussion Guide

1. How does Elizabeth Strout use the character of Lucy Barton to explore the concept of empathy? What did you learn about your own capacity for radical empathy?
2. How does the murder investigation affect the dynamics between the characters, particularly Bob Burgess and Lucy?
3. Discuss the relationship between Lucy and her ex-husband, William. How does their past influence their current interactions? Have you ever been involved in a similarly complicated and shifting relationship, romantic or otherwise?
4. How does Strout explore the theme of isolation in the novel? Which characters do you think feel the most isolated, and why? How does this theme show up in your own life?
5. What role does the town lawyer, Bob Burgess, play in the unfolding events? How does his character evolve throughout the story?
6. How do Lucy Barton and Olive Kitteridge's meetups reveal different aspects of their personalities? If you could ask either character any question, what would you ask?
7. What does the novel suggest about the nature of love and its various forms?
8. How do the characters grapple with the question "What does anyone's life mean?" What are some examples of this?
9. Discuss the idea of "unrecorded lives" as presented by Olive Kitteridge. How does this concept resonate throughout the novel? What does this concept mean for you?
10. How does the author use silence and what is left unsaid to convey deeper meanings and emotions?
11. How does Strout use the theme of friendship to explore the complexities of human relationships?
12. In what ways do the characters seek to leave a mark on the world, and how successful are they in their endeavors?
13. How did this novel make you think about your own legacy?
14. How does the novel address the theme of healing and redemption? Which characters experience the most significant transformations?
15. If you've read other books by Elizabeth Strout, what was it like for you to see the characters' universes converge? Which characters were you most eager to see again?

Author Bio

Elizabeth Strout is the #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *TELL ME EVERYTHING*, an Oprah's Book Club pick; *LUCY BY THE SEA*; *OH WILLIAM!*; *OLIVE, AGAIN*; *ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE*, winner of the Story Prize; *MY*

NAME IS LUCY BARTON; THE BURGESS BOYS; OLIVE KITTERIDGE, winner of the Pulitzer Prize; ABIDE WITH ME; and AMY AND ISABELLE, winner of the *Los Angeles Times* Art Seidenbaum Award for First Fiction and the *Chicago Tribune* Heartland Prize. She has also been a finalist for the PEN/Faulkner Award and the Orange Prize in London. She lives in Maine.

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