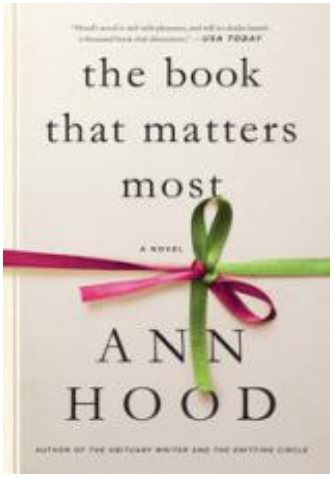
The Book That Matters Most

by Ann Hood



About the Book

An enthralling novel about love, loss, secrets, friendship and the healing power of literature, by the bestselling author of THE KNITTING CIRCLE.

Ava?s 25-year marriage has fallen apart, and her two grown children are pursuing their own lives outside of the country. Ava joins a book group, not only for her love of reading but also out of sheer desperation for companionship. The group?s goal throughout the year is for each member to present the book that matters most to them. Ava rediscovers a mysterious book from her childhood --- one that helped her through the traumas of the untimely deaths of her sister and mother. Alternating with Ava?s story is that of her troubled daughter Maggie, who, living in Paris, descends into a destructive relationship with an older man.

Ava?s mission to find that book and its enigmatic author takes her on a quest that unravels the secrets of her past and offers her and Maggie the chance to remake their lives.

Discussion Guide

1. Why do you think Ann Hood centered her novel on a book group? What is it about the group that is so therapeutic for Ava?

2. What lessons do Ava and the other members learn from the works of great literature they read?

3. What book matters the most to you, and why?

4. The characters in the novel keep secrets. What are their secrets? Are they damaging?

5. Do you think the death of Ava?s mother influenced who Ava is as a person and how she acts as a parent? How so?

6. How is reading as a group different than reading alone? How does this impact Ava? Do you think Ava?s fling with Luke would have happened if she didn?t join the book club?

7. How does Maggie trick herself into spiraling out of control? What were her intentions and how did they go awry?

8. Maggie mentions that she is a fundamentally bad and destructive person. Do you agree? How does she change by the end?

9. The novel alternates between Maggie and Ava?s narratives. How are the two protagonists similar? In what ways do their journeys resemble each other?

10. Only as an adult does Ava realize the true meaning behind FROM CLARE TO HERE. What is the meaning? Why do you think it takes her so long?

11. On page 346, Beatrice, Hank, Ava, and Maggie talk about how there are some things you can?t change, and some things you can. What do you think each character means by this? What does each character regret?

12. What lessons do Ava and the other members learn from the literature they read?

13. Why do you think Beatrice lies to Ava and Hank about Charlotte?

14. At the beginning, Ava admits she?s not much of a reader. How does this change over the course of the book?

Author Bio

Ann Hood is the author of a dozen books of memoir and fiction, including the bestselling novels THE BOOK THAT MATTERS MOST and THE KNITTING CIRCLE, and editor of the anthologies KNITTING YARNS and KNITTING PEARLS. She lives in Providence, Rhode Island, and New York.

Photo Credit: Beowulf Sheehan

The Book That Matters Most
by Ann Hood

Publication Date: August 1, 2017
Genres: Fiction
Paperback: 384 pages
Publisher: W. W. Norton & Company
ISBN-10: 0393354091
ISBN-13: 9780393354096