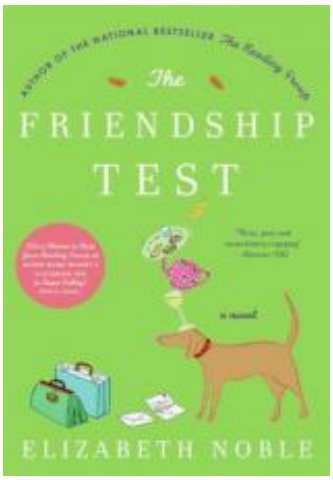
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The Friendship Test

by Elizabeth Noble



About the Book

One late wine and gossip-fueled night, four friends on a lark create a fateful test of friendship -- one that challenges the very principles and boundaries of their alliance. To pass it means to never, at any cost, betray one another. Twenty years later, they must face that ultimate test.

We meet them at the dawn of their camaraderie in the 1980s and already each woman is distinguished from the other: Tamsin, the compassionate mother hen; Reagan, the brazen and clever overachiever; Sarah, the seemingly perfect beauty; and Freddie, who despite being far from her U.S. home, finds strength in her friends. We forward to today, and as promised they are still firm friends . . . that is until a crisis occurs and the principles that define their friendship test are challenged. Exquisitely rendered by Elizabeth Noble, **The Friendship Test** is a powerful testament to the depth and capacity of female relationships.

Discussion Guide

1. Although each of the four women have important men in their lives they still rely heavily on the bonds of their friendships. What do you think they get from their relationships with one another that they aren't able to get from a man?

2. Throughout the book it's clear that Reagan has major doubts about her own self-worth and her place in the group. This view of herself is manifested in her attitude towards men and her friends' lives. Why was she so consumed with jealousy rather than love? How is she able to overcome this and approach life with a more positive outlook?

3. When Freddie and her mother finally sit down and talk, Rebecca says, "I saw that it would be more selfish to come back into your life than it had been to leave it in the first place." Did you find this explanation adequate? How did Rebecca's decision to not come back and get Freddie affect Freddie's life in a positive way and make her the woman she ultimately became?

4. In many ways **The Friendship Test** is a novel of forgiveness and acceptance. Freddie must forgive her parents and her husband, the friends must forgive Reagan for her outbursts, Matthew must accept that Sarah is gone, Reagan must accept that Matthew does not love her. What does it mean to forgive? How do forgiveness and acceptance help each character move on with their lives?

5. At one point Tamsin opines that Freddie is "putting obstacles in the way of her own happiness." Many of us often do this out of fear or the feeling that we don't deserve to be happy. How does Freddie overcome this?

6. Throughout the novel we are shown the many different types of love found in life: love between a husband and wife, love between friends, love between mothers and their children. How would you compare Freddie's love for Harry with her father's love for her? How about Matthew's love for Sarah and Freddie? How does love change and grow? Can love become unhealthy?

Author Bio

Elizabeth Noble was born in High Wycombe, Bucks, and now lives in New York with her husband and two daughters. She studied English at Oxford University and after graduating embarked on a career in publishing before taking up writing full time. She is the author of seven novels: THE READING GROUP, THE TENKO CLUB, ALPHABET WEEKENDS, THINGS I WANT MY DAUGHTERS TO KNOW, THE GIRL NEXT DOOR and THE WAY WE WERE, which were all *Sunday Times* Top Ten bestsellers. THE READING GROUP reached Number One. Her new novel, BETWEEN A MOTHER AND HER CHILD, is out now.

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