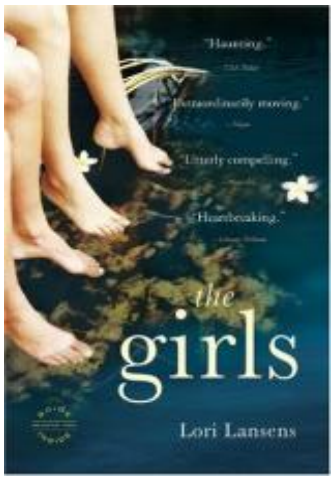
The Girls

by Lori Lansens



About the Book

Rarely has the experience of being a sister been so poignantly and memorably captured as in Lori Lansens's triumphant novel. **The Girls** celebrates life's fundamental joys and trials as it presents Rose and Ruby, sisters destined to live inseparably but blessed with distinct sensibilities that enrich and complicate their shared experiences-of growing up, of finding their way in the world, of saying good-bye.

Readers who encounter the girls will find it hard to resist falling under their spell.

Discussion Guide

1. The Girls is written as a fictional autobiography. Why do you think the author chose this format? Did you ever have to remind yourself while reading that **The Girls** is a novel rather than a memoir?

2. Rose and Ruby have spent every moment of their lives bound to each other, and yet they have forged two very distinct personalities and ways of looking at the world. What does this novel say about identity? How does each sister manifest individuality? In what ways do they borrow from each other?

3. The girls are accustomed to being stared at. But when they travel with Aunt Lovey and Uncle Stash to Slovakia, they find themselves in a situation where for the first time in their lives not one person stares. Why does Rose find this so unsettling?

4. A major theme of the novel is the challenge of being an outsider. Are there characters other than Rose and Ruby who could be considered outcasts? What do they add to the story, and to your understanding of the novel?

5. Throughout **The Girls** we are let in on information that Rose and Ruby don't tell each other. What role do secrets play

in the story? Were you surprised by some of the things Rose and Ruby kept from each other? What about Aunt Lovey and Uncle Stash?

6. What function does the town of Leaford have in the narrative? Could this lonely corner of Canada be said to be a character in itself? How might the story have been different had it taken place somewhere else?

7. The novel is, at times, endearingly funny. Do you have a favorite comedic moment?

8. Aunt Lovey is portrayed by Rose and Ruby as a very wise woman. Is it possible that their perception of her is influenced by their deep gratitude for her sacrifices in raising them? Why do you think they never refer to her as their mother?

9. Did you find yourself forgetting that Rose and Ruby were joined at the head? In what way is the bond of sisterhood more important than their physical link?

10. The girls said that, if given the chance, they wouldn't want to be separated. Is this a sentiment you understand? How does the dynamic of the girls relate to real-life relationships you've been in or witnessed?

Author Bio

Lori Lansens is the author of RUSH HOME ROAD, which was translated into eight languages and published in 11 countries, and THE GIRLS, which was sold in 13 territories and featured as a book club pick by Richard & Judy in the UK. She was born and raised in Chatham, Ontario, and now makes her home in Los Angeles with her husband and two children.

Critical Praise

"Lansens, who has a gentle, open way of writing, makes of these two girls a kind of perfect marriage, harmonious and everlasting."

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