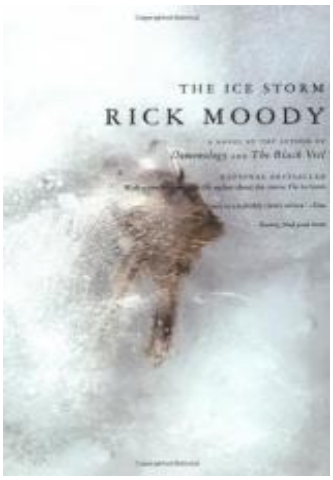
ReadingGroupGuides
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The Ice Storm

by Rick Moody



About the Book

the year is 1973. As a freak winter storm bears down on an exclusive, affluent suburb in Connecticut, cars skid out of control, fathers and mothers swap partners, and their children experiment with sex, drugs, and even suicide. Here two families, the Hoods and the Williamses, come face-to-face with the seething emotions behind the well-clipped lawns of their lives?in a novel widely hailed as a funny, acerbic, and moving hymn to a dazed and confused era of American life.

Discussion Guide

1. Discuss the book's title. Does it signify anything beyond the freak November storm that rages throughout the novel?

2. The Ice Storm is filled with period detail that captures the tone and texture of the 1970's. What might be different about the lives of the Hood and Williams families if their story were unfolding today?

3. Each member of the Hood family acknowledges feeling lonely. What accounts for this prevailing sense of alienation?

4. "Wendy's ambition was to be as unlike her mother as possible in every way." How unusual is such a sentiment in a fourteen-year-old girl? In what ways is Wendy's situation extreme?

5. Rick Moody has been frequently compared with John Cheever and John Updike as a chronicler of suburban American life. Do you think the drama (and comedy) of **The Ice Storm** is intrinsically suburban? In what ways might story be different if the novel's setting were urban or rural?

6. The Ice Storm is set in the era of the sexual revolution. Discuss the ways in which the radically changing mores of the time are reflected in the lives of each member of the Hood family.

7. The novel is narrated from four different perspectives. Was there one perspective, one series of passages, that you enjoyed reading more than the others? Why?

8. Benjamin Hood explains to his wife that unfaithfulness is "the law of the land." Do you agree with him? Do you think this justifies his adultery?

9. For which of the novel's characters did you feel the greatest sympathy? Why?

10. If members of your reading group have seen the movie **The Ice Storm**, discuss the ways in which the book and film differ, and the extent to which the film succeeds in capturing the book's essence.

Author Bio

Rick Moody is the author of two memoirs --- THE LONG ACCOMPLISHMENT and the award-winning THE BLACK VEIL --- the novels HOTELS OF NORTH AMERICA, THE FOUR FINGERS OF DEATH, THE DIVINERS, PURPLE AMERICA, THE ICE STORM and GARDEN STATE, and multiple collections of short fiction. Moody is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, and his work has been anthologized in *Best American Stories*, *Best American Essays* and the Pushcart Prize anthology. He lives in Rhode Island.

Critical Praise

"Moody brings this profusion of metaphor to order with a fierce, subversive intelligence. His characters, drawn with a manic acuity that isn't fully accounted for until the end, stay with us long after we've finished reading."

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