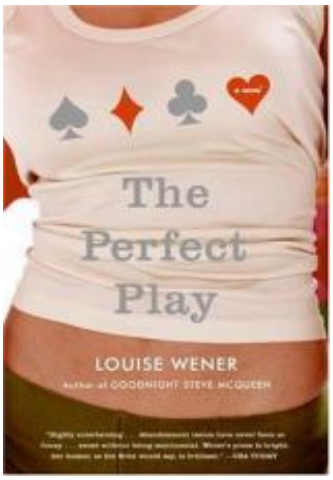
The Perfect Play: A Novel

by Louise Wener



About the Book

Playing the cards she's been dealt has left Audrey Unger feeling out of control. Her professional poker-playing father walked out of her life when she was eleven. Now in her early thirties -- on the verge of her own midlife crisis -- she's prepared to risk everything to find him. In an attempt to discover what made him gamble and what drove him to give her up, Audrey must immerse herself in her father's world: a world of high-stakes gambling and ego-driven men who never want to lose.

Audrey is about to play the biggest game of her life. Who says a woman can't bluff? Those sitting across the table from her are about to realize that Audrey has the spirit of adventure in her blood.

Discussion Guide

1. How would you describe Audrey Unger's relationship with her long-term boyfriend, Joe? What keeps these two characters together?

2. How did ,**The Perfect Play**'s humorous narrative tone affect your appreciation of the novel's characters and their unusual situations?

3. Did you find Big Louie entirely trustworthy? What aspects of his character most intrigued you?

4. To what extent is Audrey's ongoing friendship with Big Louie about filling the gap created by her father's disappearance?

5. Over the course of **The Perfect Play**, how does Audrey come to inhabit her father's gambling persona and understand him better?

6. Did you feel that Audrey's turn as "mechanic" in the game against Karl/Balloon Boy was ethical? To what extent was it justified?

7. "I liked the challenge and the order and the symmetry, and the prospect of finding the perfect play." How does this novel convey the intellectual, emotional, and utterly irrational aspects of gambling?

8. How does the game Audrey plays in Las Vegas serve to liberate Big Louie, and how does it manage to liberate her?

9. Which characters in **The Perfect Play** did you most identify with? Why?

10. If you had to speculate about Audrey's reunion with her father, how do you think it might all turn out in the end?

Author Bio

Louise Wener, author of **Goodnight Steve McQueen**, was born and raised in Ilford, East London. In the mid-1990s, after singing into hairbrushes and working in dead-end jobs, she found fame as a lead singer with the pop band Sleeper and went on to record three top-ten albums and eight top-forty singles. She lives in London.

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Publication Date: October 4, 2005
Paperback: 352 pages
Publisher: Harper Paperbacks
ISBN-10: 006058548X
ISBN-13: 9780060585488