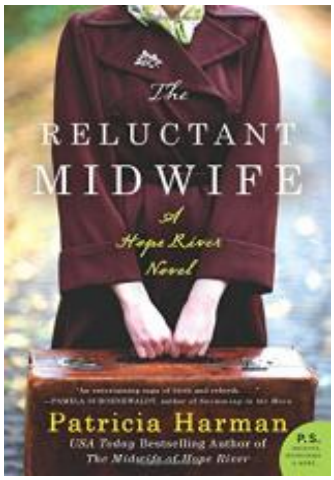
The Reluctant Midwife: A Hope River Novel

by Patricia Harman



About the Book

The *USA Today* bestselling author of THE MIDWIFE OF HOPE RIVER returns with a heartfelt sequel, a novel teeming with life and full of humor and warmth, one that celebrates the human spirit.

The Great Depression has hit West Virginia hard. Men are out of work; women struggle to feed hungry children. Luckily, Nurse Becky Myers has returned to care for them. While she can handle most situations, Becky is still uneasy helping women deliver their babies. For these mothers-to-be, she relies on an experienced midwife, her dear friend Patience Murphy.

Though she is happy to be back in Hope River, time and experience have tempered Becky?s cheerfulness --- as tragedy has destroyed the vibrant spirit of her former employer Dr. Isaac Blum, who has accompanied her. Patience, too, has changed. Married and expecting a baby herself, she is relying on Becky to keep the mothers of Hope River safe.

But becoming a midwife and ushering precious new life into the world is not Becky?s only challenge. Her skills and courage will be tested when a calamitous forest fire blazes through a Civilian Conservation Corps camp. And she must find a way to bring Isaac back to life and rediscover the hope they both need to go on.

Full of humor and compassion, THE RELUCTANT MIDWIFE is a moving tribute to the power of optimism and love to overcome the most trying circumstances and times, and is sure to please fans of the poignant "Call the Midwife" television series.

Discussion Guide

1. When Becky returns to Liberty in 1934, she is broke and finds out that Dr. Blum?s home has been sold for back taxes. Currently, many families have lost their homes to foreclosure. Have you ever been poor or nearly destitute? How do you

think you would react?

2. Dr. Blum?s disability is frustrating to Becky. Even though she?s a nurse and a friend, she doesn?t really have to take care of him. What would you do? (Keeping in mind that he has no family willing to take him and there were no adult social services available during the Great Depression.)

3. Becky came from an affluent family. She has never had to want for anything. It?s hard for her to accept the charity of Mr. Bittman when he gives her the box of rotten apples?How do you think you would feel?

4. Patience, the midwife of Hope River, is comfortable with the noises and smells and sights of childbirth, but Becky finds them unsettling and downright scary. How do you feel?

5. Facing the hard winter, Patience tells Becky that they will all have to pull together and somehow they will get through. In our mobile society, what place do family and community play in your life?

6. If you, like Patience, had to stay in bed for three months to keep from losing your baby, do you think you could do it?

7. What do you think about the friendship between Dr. Hester and Dr. Blum? How does the vet help Dr. Blum heal?

8. How does Blum?s experience being helpless and poor change him?

9. How do we heal one another? Have you ever had an experience when a friend played a big role in helping you heal physically or emotionally?

10. Have you ever heard of the CCC camps? How do you think they would benefit society today?

11. What is it that the Hazel Patch folks have that many others in Union County do not?

12. The forest fire of 1935 left death and destruction in its wake. Have you ever faced a natural disaster? How did it change you?

Author Bio

Patricia Harman, CNM, got her start as a lay midwife on rural communes and went on to become a nurse-midwife on the faculties of Ohio State University, Case Western Reserve University, and West Virginia University. She is the author of two acclaimed memoirs and four novels: THE MIDWIFE OF HOPE RIVER, THE RELUCTANT MIDWIFE, THE RUNAWAY MIDWIFE and ONCE A MIDWIFE. She has three sons and lives near Morgantown, West Virginia.

Critical Praise

?An entrancing saga of birth and rebirth, of people you come to love as they confront loss and guilt, poverty and fear, silence and doubt.?

The Reluctant Midwife: A Hope River Novel

by Patricia Harman

Publication Date: March 3, 2015
Genres: Cultural Studies, Family, Fiction, Historical Fiction , Literary Fiction, Women's Fiction, Women's History
Paperback: 432 pages
Publisher: William Morrow Paperbacks
ISBN-10: 0062358243
ISBN-13: 9780062358240