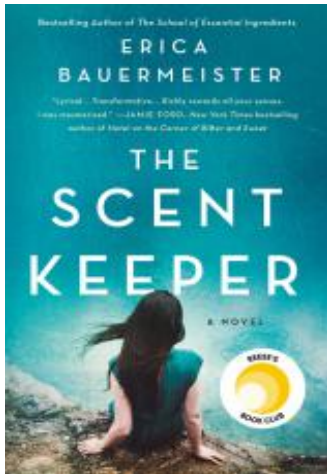


# The Scent Keeper

by Erica Bauermeister

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## About the Book

**Erica Bauermeister, the national bestselling author of THE SCHOOL OF ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS, presents a moving and evocative coming-of-age novel about childhood stories, families lost and found, and how a fragrance conjures memories capable of shaping the course of our lives.**

Emmeline lives an enchanted childhood on a remote island with her father, who teaches her about the natural world through her senses. What he won't explain are the mysterious scents stored in the drawers that line the walls of their cabin, or the origin of the machine that creates them. As Emmeline grows, however, so too does her curiosity, until one day the unforeseen happens, and Emmeline is vaulted out into the real world --- a place of love, betrayal, ambition and revenge. To understand her past, Emmeline must unlock the clues to her identity, a quest that challenges the limits of her heart and imagination.

Lyrical and immersive, THE SCENT KEEPER explores the provocative beauty of scent, the way it can reveal hidden truths, lead us to the person we seek, and even help us find our way back home.

## Discussion Guide

1. What is the smell of childhood for you?
2. If you could preserve one scent, what would it be?
3. In the course of the book, Emmeline lives on the island, in Secret Cove, and in the city. Each location affected her profoundly and differently. How have the places you've lived affected you?
4. What do you think the story of the Nightingale means to John? To Emmeline? Why do you think John cut it from the

book?

**5.** The Nightingale is a fictional invention. Discuss its role in the book.

**6.** Both John and Victoria have a wall of scents. What do you think they mean to each of the characters?

**7.** Emmeline's father strives to preserve memories through scent. Emmeline's mother uses scent to influence others. Rene is trying to recreate scents that are disappearing in the modern world. What are the up- and downsides to their actions?

**8.** What do you think of Emmeline's relationship with scents? How does it change as she gets older?

**9.** Secrets are an important element in *THE SCENT KEEPER*. Which secrets do you think the characters were right to keep? Which should they have told and when?

**10.** What do you think about John's decision to take Emmeline to the island? How do you feel about their relationship?

**11.** What do you think was the most important lesson Emmeline learned on the island?

**12.** At one point, Emmeline comes to understand that her father has been revealing his past through stories. What do you think he was trying to tell her?

**13.** Emmeline experiences the deaths of Cleo, her father and Dodge. How does her reaction to each differ? What does each one tell us about her?

**14.** How do you see Emmeline's relationship with her parents change through the book?

**15.** What role does Fisher play in Emmeline's life? How does that change?

**16.** What do you think about Emmeline's decision to take Fisher to the island?

**17.** Emmeline blames herself for her father's death, and for the confrontation between Fisher and his father. Do you think she was right to do so?

**18.** Fisher chose to leave his abusive father (and Emmeline). His mother chose to stay. What do you think about each of their decisions?

**19.** At one point in the book, Fisher's mother says: "Martin used to tell me how salmon always return to the same stream to spawn. They say it's the smell that draws them upstream. Maybe we're more like fish than we think." How does this apply to the characters in the book? Do you agree with the statement?

**20.** Several chapter titles are repeated in the book. Why do you think that is?

**21.** How do the prologue and epilogue affect your reading of the book?

22. Fairy tales and stories are present throughout the book. What is their role in the book? In our lives?

## Author Bio

Erica Bauermeister is the author of NO TWO PERSONS, THE SCENT KEEPER, THE SCHOOL OF ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS, JOY FOR BEGINNERS and THE LOST ART OF MIXING. She is also the co-author of nonfiction works 500 GREAT BOOKS BY WOMEN: A Reader's Guide and LET'S HEAR IT FOR THE GIRLS: 375 Great Books for Readers 2-14.

She has a PhD in literature from the University of Washington, and has taught there and at Antioch University. She is a founding member of the Seattle7Writers and currently lives in Port Townsend, Washington.

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