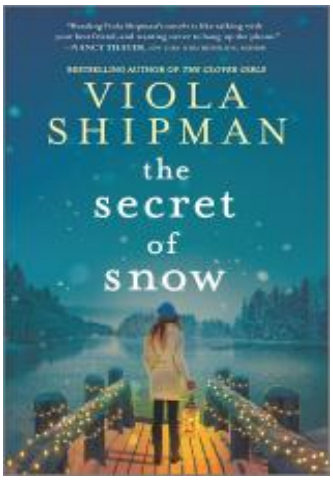
ReadingGroupGuides
The online community for reading groups

The Secret of Snow

by Viola Shipman



About the Book

The forecast is calling for a reluctant homecoming and regrettable decisions with a strong chance of romance.

When Sonny Dunes, a SoCal meteorologist whose job is all sunshine and 72-degree days, is replaced by a virtual meteorologist that will never age, gain weight or renegotiate its contract, the only station willing to give the 50-year-old another shot is the very place she has been avoiding since the day she left for college --- her northern Michigan hometown.

Sonny grudgingly returns to the long, cold, snowy winters of her childhood?with the added humiliation of moving back in with her mother. Not quite an outsider but no longer a local, Sonny finds her past blindsiding her everywhere: from the high school friends she ghosted, to the former journalism classmate and mortal frenemy who?s now her boss, to, most keenly, the death years ago of her younger sister, who loved the snow.

To distract herself from the memories she's spent her life trying to outrun, Sonny throws herself headfirst into covering every small-town winter event to woo a new audience, made more bearable by a handsome widower with optimism to spare. But with someone trying to undermine her efforts to rebuild her career, Sonny must make peace with who she used to be and allow her heart to thaw if she?s ever going to find a place she can truly call home.

Discussion Guide

1. Many of the memories and traditions I share in THE SECRET OF SNOW are inspired by my own life. What are your favorite holiday traditions? Why? What memories do they conjure?

2. What are your favorite winter activities? Why?

3. Do you like winter? What does this season mean to you?

4. A major theme of THE SECRET OF SNOW is loss. Has the loss of someone in your life affected the way you celebrate the holidays, which can often amplify our feelings of loneliness and sadness?

5. How have you coped with loss? Or not coped with loss? How? Why? Discuss.

6. Sonny and her mother (my mother, by the way, was a hospice nurse in real life!) have a wonderfully complicated relationship. They love one another deeply, but the pain they?ve experienced has made Sonny build a wall around her heart. What is or was your relationship with your mother like? What made it that way?

7. Sonny and Lisa are what we term today as ?frenemies.? Have you ever had a frenemy? How did they hurt you? Or how did you hurt them? Did you ever repair your friendship? How?

8. If I weren?t an author, I always fancied I might be a meteorologist like Sonny, as I?m obsessed with the weather. (In fact, some of my dear friends are meteorologists.) What would you have done if you were not doing what you?re doing now?

9. Do you believe women are treated differently than men in the workplace, especially women ?of a certain age? like Sonny? Why or why not?

10. Do you believe we treat women in the media (celebrities, TV personalities) differently than we treat men? Do we judge them more harshly based solely on their appearance? Discuss.

11. Mason lost his wife to depression. I lost a dear friend in college to depression and suicide. Do you know anyone battling depression, or someone who has taken his/her own life? How did you try to help? How did that impact you?

12. People either love or hate snow in the winter. What do you think of snow?

13. Have you or a friend ever experienced a ?later-in-life? romance like Sonny and Mason?

14. Have you ever been to Michigan or Palm Springs? What are your thoughts on these two beautiful locations (can you tell I?m biased)?

Author Bio

Viola Shipman is a pen name for Wade Rouse, a popular award-winning memoirist and an internationally bestselling author of 12 books, which have been translated into 20 languages and selected as "Today" show Must-Reads, Indie Next Picks and Michigan Notable Books. Rouse writes fiction under his grandma?s name, Viola Shipman, to honor the woman whose heirlooms inspire his writing. He lives in Michigan and California, and hosts "Wine & Words with Wade," A Literary Happy Hour, every Thursday.

The Secret of Snow

by Viola Shipman

Publication Date: October 26, 2021
Genres: Fiction, Women's Fiction
Paperback: 400 pages
Publisher: Graydon House
ISBN-10: 1525806440
ISBN-13: 9781525806445