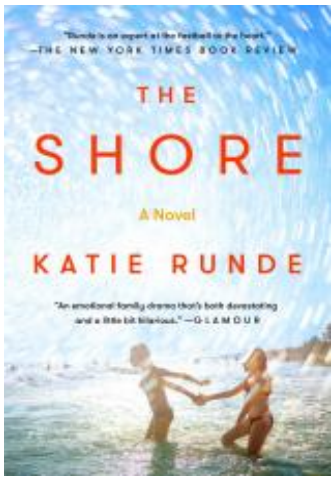
The Shore

by Katie Runde



About the Book

Set over the course of one summer, this perfect beach read follows a mother and her two daughters as they grapple with heartbreak, young love and the weight of family secrets.

Brian and Margot Dunne live year-round in Seaside, just steps away from the bustling boardwalk, with their daughters Liz and Evy. The Dunnes run a real estate company, making their living by quickly turning over rental houses for tourists. But the family?s future becomes even more precarious when Brian develops a brain tumor, transforming into a bizarre, erratic version of himself.

Amidst the chaos and new caretaking responsibilities, Liz still seeks out summer adventure and flirting with a guy she should know better than to pursue. Her younger sister, Evy, works in a candy shop, falls in love with her friend Olivia, and secretly adopts the persona of a middle-aged mom in an online support group, where she discovers her own mother?s most vulnerable confessions. Meanwhile, Margot faces an impossible choice driven by grief, impulse and the ways that small-town life in Seaside has shaped her. Falling apart is not an option, but she can always pack up and leave the beach behind.

THE SHORE is a powerful, heartbreaking and ultimately uplifting novel infused with humor about young women finding sisterhood, friendship and love in a time of crisis. This big-hearted family saga examines the grit and hustle of running a small business in a tourist town, the ways we connect with strangers when our families can?t give us everything we need, and the comfort to be found in embracing the pleasures of youth while coping with unimaginable loss.

Discussion Guide

1. We meet the Dunnes after Brian?s brain tumor has already changed him into a different person than the husband and

father Margot, Liz and Evy knew. How has his diagnosis also changed each of them? How do they deal with the uncertainty of not knowing when the end will come? What changes when Dr. Zimorodi tells them, with more certainty, ?by the end of summer? (page 72)?

2. Discuss the use of social media in the novel --- from Evy and Liz curating their Instagram profiles and checking up on their friends and crushes, to Margot finding support in an online forum and going through Brian?s old Facebook posts. How does social media function as an outlet for the characters? What positive and negative effects does it have?

3. What do you think of Evy?s decision to invent a new identity on GBM Wives forum? Discuss her reaction to learning privileged information about her parents on the forum. How does this compare to Liz?s reaction to stumbling upon Brian and Margot?s college emails?

4. Writing as Pamplemousse7 about losing someone to a glioblastoma multiforme tumor, Evy asks the GBM wives: ? *It?s worth it, isn?t it, to buy a few more months even if he isn?t himself, even if he can only see in tunnels and splotches?... If it?s a person parading around who looks like your husband but who?s acting like an agitated stranger you wouldn?t want to sit next to on a bus? If it means taking care of a person who is not a person you know? Even then?* ? (page 14). How does each woman in the Dunne family deal with this existential question? What final moments with Brian lighten, if however briefly, the pain of losing him?

5. Discuss the relationship between Liz and Evy. While they each have their own lives --- jobs, friends, romances and ways of coping --- how do they come together to support each other and their family over the course of the summer?

6. ?Coexisting with a stranger was not possible without imagining escape? (pages 22-23), thinks Margot as she dreams about selling off E&E Rentals and starting fresh. Why do you think she is so eager to move away? What do you think of her choice to hide this decision from her daughters? Why do they feel differently about the prospect of leaving Seaside?

7. ?Distraction is medicine,? thinks Liz on page 48. Have you found this to be true? How does the girls? way of finding distraction and escape in Seaside differ from Margot?s? What moments of humor and levity from the book help balance the heaviness of the plot?

8. As Evy and Liz chase after their own ?firsts,? they worry: ?*Is it okay if I do this even though we?re in this shitty holding pattern? Is it okay that this is all happening at the same time, am I a horrible person for wanting these things right now?*? (page 175). What would you say to a friend or sibling in this situation?

9. ?*There were so many ways to break someone?s heart and leave them when they needed you*,? muses Margot. Discuss previous betrayals in their marriage. Do you think that kind of ?emotional affair? is ?no better or worse? than a physical one (page 169)? How did they come to a place of forgiveness?

10. Why doesn?t Liz tell Gabe about Brian?s state? Discuss the rocky ending of their relationship. How do you think she?ll remember him? How do you feel about your first love?

11. Discuss the idea of anticipatory grief --- what the author describes as ?loss-before-loss? (page 289). How do each of the Dunnes begin processing their grief while still caring for the person they will lose? What role does memory and nostalgia play in this process?

12. Part III opens with a shift into the second person point of view. How did this shift impact your experience reading that chapter?

13. The tension between Margot and her daughters reaches a tipping point while she is in Galesta. How do they address their conflict? Do any parts of their mother-daughter dynamic remind you of your relationship with your own mother?

14. Discuss the idea of double lives in the novel --- Liz hiding the truth about her father from Gabe, Evy creating a fake identity online, Margot hiding a major secret from her daughters, and each of them saving face in their professional lives despite what?s happening at home. Do you think we are different people in different situations?

15. How do the glimpses of Brian?s perspective shape your opinion of his character?

16. How will being from Seaside shape the course of Liz and Evy?s lives? How has where you?re from shaped your life?

Author Bio

Katie Runde grew up on the Jersey Shore, where her family ran various boardwalk businesses. She holds an MFA from Warren Wilson College and lives in Iowa City with her husband and two daughters. THE SHORE is her first novel.

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