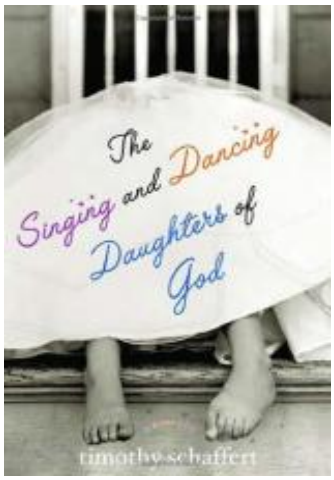
The Singing and Dancing Daughters of God

by Timothy Schaffert



About the Book

Hud and Tuesday are living, breathing, squirming examples of the refrain that breaking up is hard to do. And not only is the marriage of the divorced duo asunder, their teenage son Gatling has broken away to follow the rhythms of an itinerant gospel rock band made of four fundamentalist, but less-than-angelic, beauties called Daughters of God. The erstwhile couple's eight-year-old daughter Nina is the one generous helping of sugar in their bittersweet lives. And Hud toys with the notion of kidnapping the child, hoping that she will act as the magnet that will draw his splintered family back together.

The Singing Dancing Daughters of God is a funny and heart-strumming tale about a night club piano player enamored with country music, old movies and a family he just cannot get a grip on. With a one-of-a-kind point-of-view, Timothy Schaffert's novel looks out on loves lost and found again and lives tangled and sorted out. He has composed a tale of everyday tragedy as real and frustrating as any cataclysmic world event. And he has written story of hope as palpable as sunshine.

Discussion Guide

1. What will become of Hud and Tuesday's relationship, following their adventure to South Dakota?

2. Discuss the theme of fight/flight throughout Hud and Tuesday's relationship, both in their direct interactions with each other, and their interactions through their children.

3. How is Hud's relationship to music, and the writing of songs, different from that of Gatling's?

4. How does church and religion inform the characters' lives? In what do the characters have the greatest faith?

5. What affect do the movies have on the characters' sense of romance? How do movies affect their senses of themselves?

6. What role does Halloween play in this novel and why do you think the author featured this holiday rather than another?

7. How are children both treasured and protected, or not, in this novel?

8. The book begins with Hud's ruminations about how society comes together over tragedy, grief, and loss. Is this book a tragedy, a comedy, or both?

9. How did Hud's and Tuesday's marrying young affect their lives and inform their regrets? What is their sense of family and sense of community, and how does this play out both in the family break up and in their hopes for reuniting?

10. Why do you think the author chose such distinctive names for his characters? How do the names develop the characters for readers?

11. How do Hud's and Tuesday's youthful expectations for moving beyond the limitations of their town color their sense of the future, their attitudes about their marriage, and their relationships with their children?

12. How much of their nostalgia for a better time is genuine and how does it affect their dreams for a future?

13. What role does music play in this novel?

14. Is this a love story? If so, whose?

Author Bio

Timothy Schaffert grew up on a farm in Nebraska and now lives in Omaha. He is the author of seven novels, including THE TITANIC SURVIVORS BOOK CLUB, THE PERFUME THIEF and THE SWAN GONDOLA. Schaffert teaches creative writing and literature at the University of Nebraska?Lincoln.

Critical Praise

"The Singing and Dancing Daughters of God is an honest and unflinching story of families unraveled and the heartache and joy only loved ones can spark in each other. With skill and tenderness, Timothy Schaffert unfolds his characters' hopes, strengths, and frailties in this gorgeous novel, revealing the crazy-quilt fabric of humanity."

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Publication Date: November 21, 2005

Paperback: 229 pages

Publisher: Unbridled Books

ISBN-10: 1932961127

ISBN-13: 9781932961126