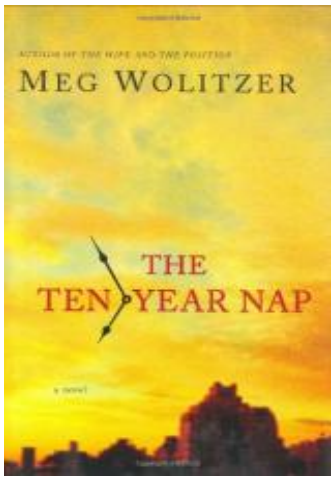
ReadingGroupGuides
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The Ten-year Nap

by Meg Wolitzer



About the Book

From the bestselling author of **The Wife** and **The Position**, a feverishly smart novel about female ambition, money, class, motherhood, and marriage --- and what happens in one community when a group of educated women chooses not to work.

For a group of four New York friends, the past decade has been largely defined by marriage and motherhood. Educated and reared to believe that they would conquer the world, they then left jobs as corporate lawyers, investment bankers, and film scouts to stay home with their babies. What was meant to be a temporary leave of absence has lasted a decade. Now, at age forty, with the halcyon days of young motherhood behind them and without professions to define them, Amy, Jill, Roberta and Karen face a life that is not what they were brought up to expect but seems to be the one they have chosen.

But when Amy gets to know a charismatic and successful working mother of three who appears to have fulfilled the classic women's dream of having it all --- work, love, family-without having to give anything up, a lifetime's worth of concerns, both practical and existential, opens up. As Amy's obsession with this woman's bustling life grows, it forces the four friends to confront the choices they've made in opting out of their careers --- until a series of startling events shatters the peace and, for some of them, changes the landscape entirely.

Written in Meg Wolitzer's inimitable, glittering style, **The Ten-Year Nap** is wickedly observant, knowing, provocative, surprising, and always entertaining, as it explores the lives of these women with candor, wit, and generosity.

Discussion Guide

1. Though much of the story is told from the perspective of Amy, her friends, and their families, at times the perspective widens to include all women. What is the purpose of this technique? What is the author trying to convey through its use?

2. One of the main themes of the novel is the legacy of the feminist movement, with Amy?s mother representing the promise of its early years and Amy and her friends representing its practical result. What, overall, does the novel have to say about feminism? Is the idea of feminism still relevant in today?s society?

3. Although Roberta initially seeks to help Brandy Gillop with her art career, she ultimately abandons her. How did this affect your assessment of Roberta?s character? Were you surprised? What is your overall assessment of her?

4. Amy?s friendship with Penny begins when she learns of Penny?s affair with Ian, and ends when he is injured on Saint Doe?s. Discuss the relationship between Penny and Amy. Why does the affair create such an intense ? though fleeting ? bond between these women?

5. While most of the ?flashback? chapters deal with the parents of the novel?s main characters, a few focus on real historical and contemporary figures: Margaret Thatcher, Georgette Magritte, Nadia Comaneci. Why do you think the author included these chapters? How do these glimpses of their lives tie into the larger themes of the novel?

6. Amy?s discovery of her Leo?s falsified ?business expenses? causes her to question her belief in him and their marriage. Why does this discovery cause her so much distress? What does it say about her relationship with her husband and her expectations from life in general?

7. Though she rarely speaks of it explicitly, the suicide of Jill?s mother has clearly cast a shadow over Jill?s entire life. Discuss Jill?s life story ? her early promise as a student at Pouncey, the humiliation of her failed doctoral thesis, her struggles with raising Nadia ? in the context of this early trauma. How does her mother?s fate shape Jill?s reactions to events in adulthood? Are there ways in which it has made her stronger?

8. Unlike the rest of the book, which is told from the point of view of women, chapter fourteen is told from Amy?s father?s perspective. What is the significance of this chapter? What do you think the author is trying to convey through this character?

Author Bio

Meg Wolitzer is the *New York Times* bestselling author of THE FEMALE PERSUASION, THE INTERESTINGS, THE UNCOUPLING, THE TEN-YEAR-NAP, THE POSITION, THE WIFE and SLEEPWALKING. She is also the author of the young adult novel BELZHAR. Wolitzer lives in New York City.

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