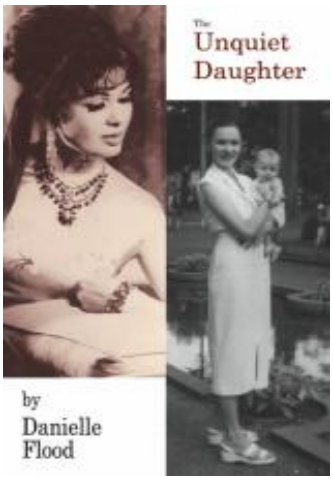
The Unquiet Daughter

by Danielle Flood



About the Book

THE UNQUIET DAUGHTER, an Amazon bestseller, has been acclaimed by *Publishers Weekly* as a ?heartbreaking?gripping?powerful? tale of family and romantic love.

I have been looking for home in my house again through these windows that are my eyes. Home comes and goes, like thoughts, like the clouds drifting over our slightly wild blue garden. It doesn?t make sense, for I am loved by my husband and our children who scamper in and out during the day. I am loved by the dog even, who likes to listen with me to opera in the evening. Still, the feeling that home is somewhere in general and nowhere in particular returns, quite predictably, when I remember my mother.

Kept from much of her family?s identity for decades, a New York journalist, born of the wartime love triangle that inspired the one in Graham Greene?s THE QUIET AMERICAN, searches for her father after barely surviving a youth of privilege, estrangement and cruelty.

As she yearns for her father?s love and presence, Danielle?s beautiful French and Vietnamese mother leaves her in burlesque house dressing rooms in the American Midwest, in convent schools in Long Island and Dublin, and with strangers in New York City. Meanwhile, she lies to Danielle about their past for decades in this sometime-humorous near-tragic mystery and love story between a daughter and a mother and more.

In the end, we learn if Flood?s journey through the truth of what happened between her parents in early 1950?s Saigon satisfies her life-long quest for who she is.

Discussion Guide

1. THE UNQUIET DAUGHTER is a mystery about who Danielle Flood is, who her father is and what happened in the

Saigon of French Indochina between her three parents in 1947-53. What is the point of THE UNQUIET DAUGHTER by Danielle Flood? Is there more than one point? If you believe there are multiple points, what are they?

2. Who is the Unquiet Daughter of the title of the book? Is there more than one? Why do you think the daughter is unquiet? Why is the mother unquiet? Do you think the author purposely did not describe in any way exactly who the Unquiet Daughter of the title is? Why?

3. What did you learn about life from this memoir?

4. Who is your favorite character in THE UNQUIET DAUGHTER? Why? Who is your least favorite character and why?

5. Why do you think Danielle?s mother treated her the way she did?

6. When Danielle?s mother told her to find someplace else to live, what options did Danielle have?

7. THE QUIET AMERICAN was a novel by Graham Greene, the English novelist, published in 1955 in England. Though much of THE UNQUIET DAUGHTER stands alone as a story, its links to THE QUIET AMERICAN are undeniable, according to biographer and Graham Greene expert Michael Shelden, other book reviewers and Graham Greene?s authorized biographer. Author Danielle Flood in her epilogue shows how the characters in THE QUIET AMERICAN are alike and unlike her parents and their love triangle in French Indochina during the same time frame as the action in THE QUIET AMERICAN. She also quotes Greene saying in a NEW YORK TIMES interview with V. S. Pritchett that he didn?t ?take people straight from real life in his novels?The characters in my novels are an amalgam of bits of real people?they are fused by the heat of the unconscious. Real people are too limiting.? Do you think Greene was telling the truth when he said this to Pritchett or do you think he protested too much in the Shakespearean sense of the matter?

8. Flood notes that Austrian Vietnam Scholar Joseph Buttinger said the core of Graham Greene?s THE QUIET AMERICAN is the accusation that the Americans in Saigon at the time were authors of the January 9, 1952 bombing there. After having read the epilogue and the notes in the back of THE UNQUIET DAUGHTER, do you believe that Americans in Saigon in 1950-53 were in any way involved with the January 9, 1952 downtown bombing that numbered women and children amongst its casualties?

9. Should an author acknowledge when he ?fictionalizes? a real life story or uses characters from real life in his or her novels? And if so, how should he or she do this? In an introduction or acknowledgement? Do you think that characters and real persons they are modeled from need to be exactly alike in order for the similarity between the fictional characters and the real life characters to be valid?

10. What do you think of the way the characters in THE UNQUIET DAUGHTER behaved towards to each other? How and why?

11. Were you aware that if a person was partially Vietnamese some 65 years ago, even in Vietnam, that that person was considered all Vietnamese? Does that matter? Are people who are part Vietnamese considered all Vietnamese now? What do you think of that? Should President Obama, who is half-white, be called black or African American when he is also half white? Why is he not called white?

12. Why did you decide to read THE UNQUIET DAUGHTER?

13. Danielle?s mother apparently was free in her mind about wearing clothes or not. Would you consider Danielle?s mother to be a feminist? What does women?s liberation mean?

14. What kind of possibilities does a person face when they look for their father late in life? What characteristics are needed to take on such a hunt? Are the possibilities different when someone takes on the search as a young person or as an older person, say after the age of 60?

15. Recent census information says that the number of women making the single parent decision has gone up steadily over the last 50 years and continues to do so. Do agree with Flood?s opinion that women who decide to become single mothers should consider how their child would feel about not having a father? Or do you think it is their right to carry a child into the world without considering how the child would feel about being fatherless? Do you think there is shame in single motherhood? Why? Why not?

16. Danielle Flood states that she was not happy about being fatherless, that she felt shame because of it. Why? Do you think this is still felt by some offspring in her position today?

17. Do you think children need fathers? Why or why not? Did Danielle Flood?s story influence you either way on this question?

18. Would you help someone try to find their father if they asked you for it? Why or why not?

Author Bio

Danielle Flood was a staff writer for the Associated Press, World Headquarters, New York City; *The Daily News* (Tarrytown); *The Standard-Star* (New Rochelle); *The Evening Sun* (Baltimore); *The Clearwater Sun* and *The Miami News*. Her freelance features were published in *The New York Times* and in many magazines including the (New York) *Sunday News Magazine*, *New York*, *Miami* and *Sunshine*. She has an M.S. from the Graduate School of Journalism, Columbia University, and a B.A. communications from Fordham. She lives in Southern Maine with her husband, the Pulitzer-prize winning cartoonist, Jim Morin.

Critical Praise

"Powerful," "compelling," "heartbreaking" and "a gripping story of self-doubt and self-discovery." Click here for the full review.

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