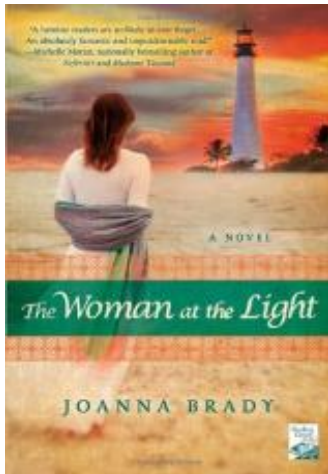


The Woman at the Light

by Joanna Brady



About the Book

One afternoon in 1839, Emily Lowry's husband vanishes from Wreckers' Cay, an isolated island off the coast of Key West where he tends to the lighthouse. As days stretch into months, Emily has no choice but take charge of Wrecker's Cay and her husband's duties tending the light to support her three children --- and a fourth on the way. Unexpected help arrives when a runaway slave named Andrew washes up on their beach. At first, Emily is intensely wary of this strange, charming man, whose very presence there is highly illegal. But Andrew proves himself an enormous help and soon wins the hearts of the Lowry family. And --- far from the outside world and society's rules --- his place in Emily's life, as steadfast now as the light, will forever change their futures. When Emily's family is ripped apart once again, she faces untold hardships that test her love and determination and show how the passionate love of a defiant, determined woman can overcome any obstacle.

Discussion Guide

1. Early on we see Emily in her own milieu of upper class new Orleans. Had she not met Martin, she would have married within that class and remained there. Knowing what we do about her headstrong character, would she have been happy there?

2. From the beginning, Emily hates Key West. At what point does her hate turn to acceptance and then to love? If she had no children, would she still have continued to hate it?

3. Martin is in many ways an enigma. He has many positive qualities, but do you feel these are outweighed by his faults? Is he someone you would find hard to live with? Talk about how his character evolves when he vanishes and only his spiritual presence remains. Do you think Emily is turning him into the husband she always wanted?

4. Did you guess early on what happened to Martin on Wreckers' Cay? What did it tell you about the competition of

wreckers to make money?

5. Pedro claims to adore Emily. Yet, he sleeps with prostitutes after their marriage. Does this seem incongruous to you, even knowing what we do of his appetites? When you think of Pedro, which Hollywood actor springs to mind?

6. Dorothy becomes a key character as the story moves along. She can be fun, but as we realize later, she has a dark side. Do you find you like her? Do you find her behavior forgivable? In Emily's place, would you have found it in your heart to pardon her?

7. If Emily had married Captain Lee, what kind of life might she have had? What about Captain Peartree? Would she have been happier if she'd stayed in New York?

8. Pedro's enthusiasm for sex --- we'd call him oversexed or addicted to sex today --- got to be really tiresome. Once she became wealthy in her own right, why do you suppose Emily stayed with him?

9. How did you feel about the ending of the book, and the way the author managed to find Ebony and integrate her into a life of her own in Key West? Did you find the resolution satisfying?

Author Bio

Joanna Brady's novel was inspired by Key West's colorful history and its female lighthouse keepers in the 19th century. She divides her time between Key West and a stone cottage in a medieval village in the Southwest of France.

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