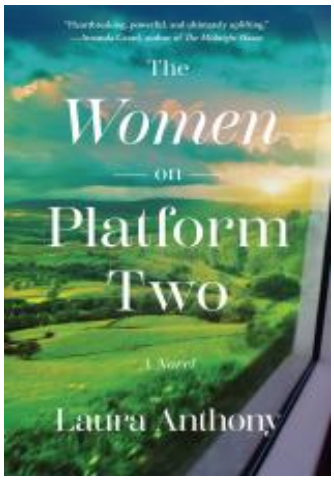
The Women on Platform Two

by Laura Anthony



About the Book

In 1970s Dublin, all forms of contraception are strictly forbidden, but an intrepid group of women will risk everything to change that in this sweeping, timely novel inspired by a remarkable and little-known true story.

Dublin, 1969: Maura has just married Dr. Christy Davenport, and they look forward to growing their family. But as her husband?s vicious temper emerges, Maura worries that her home might never be safe for a child. Meanwhile, her close friend Bernie, a mother of three, learns the devastating news that if she conceives again, her health complications could prove fatal.

Dublin, 2023: A close call makes Saoirse realize that she may never want to be a mother. Little does she know that only a few decades ago, a group of women made this option possible for her. And she?s about to meet one of them.

THE WOMEN ON PLATFORM TWO is a haunting, powerful story of feminine resistance and resilience that reminds us all of where we started --- and how far we still have to go.

Discussion Guide

1. In the opening chapter, engaged couple Saoirse and Miles argue about their future; Miles can?t wait to be a father, but Saoirse is reluctant to become a mother. Do you think family planning is something couples should discuss as soon as they start dating? Or do you think it?s better to wait until the relationship is stable and serious before talking about wanting or not wanting children?

2. In Chapter 3, Maura mentions overhearing colleagues discussing her friend, Ger. She can?t remember what they called her, but she knows it?s something beginning with an ?L.? Discuss how you think Maura feels about this, keeping in mind that homosexuality was illegal in Ireland at the time. How would you describe the trajectory of Maura?s

perspective and open-mindedness? Do you think Maura is already more progressive-thinking here than she realizes?

3. When Maura is late home to her parents? house after her first date with Christy, her father is waiting at the door, angry. She knows just what to say to appease him: ??He?s a doctor, Da.? Suddenly, her father?s demeanor changes, and he is elated. Do you think Mr. Flynn was socially biased? Do you think parents today think/behave similarly when their children start dating?

4. In Chapter 16, during a conversation with Saoirse, Maura says: ?The women of Ireland fought hard for choice. But no one ever said choosing would be easy.? In your place of residence, how have women?s? reproductive choices changed over the past decades where you live?

5. When Maura marries Christy in 1969, she has to give up her job that she loves. How did this make you feel?

6. When Maura and Bernie first meet, which character do you think is happier and why?

7. Maura and Bernie remain lifelong friends. How long is your longest friendship? What makes that relationship special to you?

8. Do you think Dan McCarthy was a unique male character? If yes, do you think most men enjoyed their dominant position? If no, do you think many men wanted equality?

9. In Chapter 25, we see Mrs. Stitch is running a secret, illegal and dangerous business. How does your opinion of her change over the course of the book?

10. What was your initial reaction to the scene in which Maura realizes that her parents may have known all along that Christy was physically violent? Based on your experience of Mr. Flynn previously in the book, were you surprised or unsurprised by this revelation?

11. When Bernie is told that getting pregnant again could kill her, she and Dan must abstain from sex. How do you think this forced loss of intimacy would change a healthy, loving marriage?

12. How did the modern-day timeline of the book add to or change the experience of the historical story?

13. At the start of the book, Maura tells Saoirse that ?a story is best told over tea and biscuits.? If you could sit down for a cup of tea and a chat with any of the characters, who would you choose and why?

Author Bio

Laura Anthony is a pseudonym for a published author of emotional women?s fiction. She lives in Kildare, Ireland, with her husband and children.

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Publication Date: January 6, 2026
Genres: Fiction, Historical Fiction, Women's Fiction
Paperback: 368 pages
Publisher: Gallery Books
ISBN-10: 166804739X
ISBN-13: 9781668047392