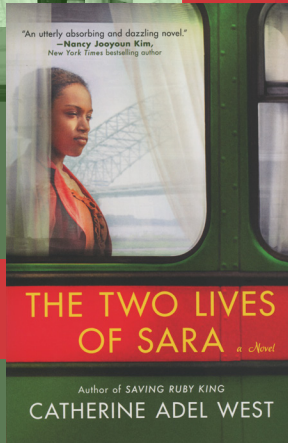


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Village
2023



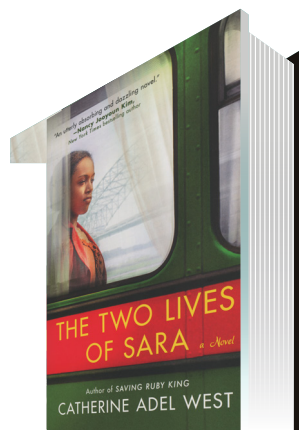
THE TWO LIVES OF SARA *a Novel*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Start the Conversation

1. The opening line of the book is "It's the heat you never get used to." What is Sara referring to here? Why do you think the author began *The Two Lives of Sara* with this sentence?
2. There are a lot of secondary and complex characters who form a community that makes this novel memorable. Who was your favorite? Why?
3. What did you think of the setting? What role does Memphis play in *The Two Lives of Sara*? If you are familiar with Memphis, especially during the late 1960s, was there anything you wanted to see more of?
4. Discuss the title *The Two Lives of Sara*. What do you think the two lives are referring to for Sara?
5. The written word is a motif throughout the book; William and Jonas bond over literature, Jonas writes Sara poetry, William is an aspiring writer, and Sara ultimately reconnects with her past life by finally writing a letter to Violet. What purpose does the act of writing serve in the story?
6. A pivotal moment is when Lennox Black burns The Scarlet Poplar to the ground. Can you think of other instances when fire is referenced in the story? What do you think fire symbolizes in the book?
7. When Sara finally decides to open herself up and receive love, her husband is taken from her. How has the presence and subsequent loss of Jonas changed Sara? Why do you think she won't accept Mama Sugar's (or The Scarlet Poplar community's) love?

8. Food is a big part of this book. It's expression. It's freedom. It's love. It's asking for forgiveness without saying "I'm sorry." Food is an unspoken language because sometimes words aren't enough, but a good meal, one made with precision and passion, can say what we can't. Discuss how food has played a part in both the book and in your life in some of these ways.
9. Cora encouraged Sara to keep moving until the next good thing. We can either choose to see life as moving from good thing to good thing or bad thing to bad thing (as Sara often chooses). Discuss this outlook as it played out in the book and as you've dealt with it in your own life.
10. Good faith, corrupt faith, lack of faith and more were discussed in the book. The author does not shy away from illuminating the difficulty of having faith in the face of tragedy. Which character did you most relate to in regard to their stance on faith? Did you walk away with any new insights?
11. Do you think Lawrence and Cora will eventually tell Sophia that she is adopted? Why or why not?
12. On the bus to Chicago, a stranger asks Sara if she's going home and she replies, "I was just there, but I can't go back." Do you think Sara will eventually return to Memphis? Why or why not?
13. Sara exhibits both personal growth and regression multiple times throughout the book. Out of the two, which one do you think prevails at the end of the story? Why? She makes some tough choices to read about. How did you feel about her in the end?



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