

Book Club Kits!

the book that matters most



About the Author:

Ann Hood is an American author of novels and short stories who has published more than a dozen books including *Somewhere off the Coast of Maine* and *The Red Thread*. She also published a bestselling memoir, *Comfort: A Journey Through Grief* in 2008.

Hood grew up in Rhode Island where her father's stories of his travels around the world during his 20 years in the Navy inspired her to become a flight attendant for TWA. After this, she published her first novel in 1987. Since then, she has published in *The New York Times*, *The Paris Review*, *O, Bon Appetit*, *Tin House*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Real Simple*, and other wonderful places. She has also won two Pushcart Prizes, two Best American Food Writing Awards, Best American Spiritual Writing and Travel Writing Awards, and a Boston Public Library Literary Light Award.

<https://www.annhood.us/bio>



Inside the kit:

- (8) book copies
- (1) book club guide

About the Book:

From Goodreads:

Ava's twenty-five-year marriage has fallen apart, and her two grown children are pursuing their own lives outside of the country. Ava joins a book group, not only for her love of reading but also out of sheer desperation for companionship. The group's goal throughout the year is for each member to present the book that matters most to them. Ava rediscovers a mysterious book from her childhood—one that helped her through the traumas of the untimely deaths of her sister and mother. Alternating with Ava's story is that of her troubled daughter Maggie, who, living in Paris, descends into a destructive relationship with an older man. Ava's mission to find that book and its enigmatic author takes her on a quest that unravels the secrets of her past and offers her and Maggie the chance to remake their lives.

Suggested Reads:

Fowler, Karen Joy

The Jane Austen Book Club

Zevin, Gabrielle

The Storied Life of A.J. Fikry

Coady, Roxanne

The Book that Changed my Life

Discussion Questions:

1. Why do you think Ann Hood centered her novel on a book group? What is it about the group that is so therapeutic for Ava?
2. What lessons do Ava and the other members learn from the works of great literature they read?
3. What book matters the most to you, and why?
4. The characters in the novel keep secrets. What are their secrets? Are they damaging?
5. Do you think the death of Ava's mother influenced who Ava is as a person and how she acts as a parent? How so?
6. How is reading as a group different than reading alone? How does this impact Ava? Do you think Ava's fling with Luke would have happened if she didn't join the book club?
7. How does Maggie trick herself into spiraling out of control? What were her intentions and how did they go awry?
8. Maggie mentions that she is a fundamentally bad and destructive person. Do you agree? How does she change by the end?
9. The novel alternates between Maggie and Ava's narratives. How are the two protagonists similar? In what ways do their journeys resemble each other?
10. Only as an adult does Ava realize the true meaning behind FROM CLARE TO HERE. What is the meaning? Why do you think it takes her so long?
11. On page 346, Beatrice, Hank, Ava, and Maggie talk about how there are some things you can't change, and some things you can. What do you think each character means by this? What does each character regret?
12. What lessons do Ava and the other members learn from the literature they read?
13. Why do you think Beatrice lies to Ava and Hank about Charlotte?
14. At the beginning, Ava admits she's not much of a reader. How does this change over the course of the book?

<https://www.readinggroupguides.com/reviews/the-book-that-matters-most/guide>