

Book Club Kits!

FATES AND FURIES



Inside the kit:

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

About the Book:

From the author's website

Fates and Furies is a literary masterpiece that defies expectation. A dazzling examination of a marriage, it is also a portrait of creative partnership written by one of the best writers of her generation.

Every story has two sides. Every relationship has two perspectives. And sometimes, it turns out, the key to a great marriage is not its truths but its secrets. At the core of this rich, expansive, layered novel, Lauren Groff presents the story of one such marriage over the course of twenty-four years.

At age twenty-two, Lotto and Mathilde are tall, glamorous, madly in love, and destined for greatness. A decade later, their marriage is still the envy of their friends, but with an electric thrill we understand that things are even more complicated and remarkable than they have seemed. With stunning revelations and multiple threads, and in prose that is vibrantly alive and original, Groff delivers a deeply satisfying novel about love, art, creativity, and power that is unlike anything that has come before it.

Profound, surprising, propulsive, and emotionally riveting, it stirs both the mind and the heart.

Suggested Reads:

Flournoy, Angela
The Turner House

Marra, Anthony
The Tsar of Love and Techno

Ostlund, Lori
After the Parade

Vaye, Claire
Gold Fame Citrus

About the Author:

Lauren Groff is the author of the novel *The Monsters of Templeton*, shortlisted for the Orange Prize for New Writers, *Delicate Edible Birds*, a collection of stories, and *Arcadia*, a New York Times Notable Book, winner of the Medici Book Club Prize, and finalist for the L.A. Times Book Award.

Her third novel, *Fates and Furies*, was a finalist for the National Book Award in Fiction, the National Book Critics Circle Award, and the Kirkus Award. It won the 2015 American Booksellers' Association Indies' Choice Award for Fiction, was a New York Times Notable book and Bestseller, Amazon.com's #1 book of 2015, and on over two dozen best-of 2015 lists. Rights have been sold in thirty countries.

Her work has appeared in journals including the *New Yorker*, the *Atlantic Monthly*, *Harper's*, *Tin House*, *One Story*, and *Ploughshares*, and in the anthologies *100 Years of the Best American Short Stories*, *The Pushcart Prize: Best of the Small Presses*, *PEN/O. Henry Prize Stories*, and four editions of the *Best American Short Stories*.

She lives in Gainesville, Florida with her husband and two sons.

<http://laurengroff.com/about/>

1. Why is Lancelot connected with the "Fate" chapter? How would you describe his personality—do you consider him passive, optimistic (unreasonably so?), fair-minded and accepting? Is he humble or, maybe, egotistical?
2. *Follow-up to Question 1:* We're told that his parents and aunt, early on, believed Lotto was destined for greatness: "It was taken for granted by this trio of adults that Lotto was special. Golden." What effect does this expectation have on his life? What effect does any such expectation have on anyone's life?
3. What about Mathilde? How would you describe her as a character? In what way is she different from, perhaps even the opposite of, Lotto?
4. *Follow-up to Question 3:* How do Mathilde's early years—in particular, its tragedy—shape the path of her life? Is fate to blame for her ruthlessness? If so, why is she associated with the "Furies" chapter rather than the "Fates" chapter?
5. In what way does the early tragedy in Lotto's life draw him to Mathilde? And vice versa—what attracts Mathilde to Lotto? How would you describe the early stages of their love and marriage? Are cracks visible at the beginning...or is all smoothness and perfection?
6. Why does Lauren Groff structure her book the way she does: two separate chapters told by two different characters? Why might she have started off with Lotto's account before Mathilde's? What difference would it have made if she had placed Lotto's after Mathilde's? What exactly gets revealed in Mathilde's telling, and were you surprised?
7. Clearly, this book is about a marriage. But the author tackles far broader issues—one of which was addressed in earlier questions (#2 and 4): to what extent do early experiences shape character and life events? Another question Groff examines is what really constitutes such things as "good fortune"? A third question has to do with the extent to which we can truly understand our own life or the life of someone close to us. Tangentially, is it possible to truly know another being? Do you want to weigh in on any of those issues? For starters, how does the novel pose those questions?
8. Talk about the author's use of wordplay, starting with, say, the name Lotto...and even Lancelot. Where else do you find words with double meanings?
9. How much do you know about classical mythology, especially the Fates and the Furies? Who are they in Greek mythology? Where else in the novel does Groff rely on mythology? Notice, for instance, the narrative interruptions, the unnamed voice who interjects and comments. How do those interjections resemble a Greek chorus—and why use such a narrative technique?
10. Are you able to pinpoint other literary allusions—say, to Shakespeare?
11. In what way are readers deliberately misled in this story—and why? Did you feel somewhat manipulated? Or is that the point of Groff's writing?
12. Any similarities here to Gillian Flynn's *Gone Girl*?