

## A NORN IN BLOOM

### DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. One of the themes in *A Norn in Bloom* centers on what happens when we keep secrets. Discuss the reasons why people keep secrets. Describe the secrets in this book and the reasons different characters had for keeping them. Do you think secrets and lies are the same? How do the characters in the novel accept or come to terms with the secrets they have kept or those that have been kept from them?
2. Who lost the most because of secrets: Zoë, Linn, JG, Camilla, Gunnar, or Wes? Who got the most when the secrets were revealed? Who do you think is the most honest character in the book?
3. What do you think about the secret that Linn kept from Camilla? Do you think she should have developed her friendship with Camilla?
4. What do you think of how Zoë's mixed parentage was portrayed/handled in the book?
5. Why does Zoë never give up trying to find her father? Did she find what she was looking for?
6. What did you think of Linn's friendship with Alicia? Did they have a good influence on each other?
7. Zoë and Linn both change over the course of this story. What are the main ways they change? What risks do they each take? Was there a decision or action you disagreed with from Zoë or Linn?
8. What do you think of Linn and JG's relationship? Did you want their relationship to succeed?
9. Discuss the issue of forgiveness in the book. Which character has the most to forgive?
10. Feeling like an outsider is a strong theme in the book. Describe that feeling in relation to Zoë, Linn, JG, Camilla, and Gunnar.
11. Identity is an overarching theme in the book. How do you think our identity is formed? What influenced Zoë and Linn?
12. Nornö is also a character in the novel. How significantly are people affected by a specific location? What role does it play in their upbringing?
13. Discuss the symbolism of the three Norns.
14. What would you describe as the turning point in Zoë and Linn's relationship? What do you see as the turning point in Linn's relationship with her mother Agnes?
15. Was Linn a likable character? On balance, did you empathize with her or feel frustration with her? Do you see her decision to lie about her relationship with Zoë's father as selfish or noble?
16. What is the role of motherhood in this novel? Who do you think is the most likable mother in the book (Linn, Agnes, or Camilla)?
17. Discuss the importance of fathers in the book. Compare and contrast Grandpa Thomas, JG, and Wes. How do the characters' relationships with their fathers differ from their relationships with their mothers? Do you think mother-daughter relationships and father-son relationships are inherently complicated? Why does Zoë seem to bond so easily with her father, JG?

18. What did you think of the evolution of JG's personality from Hultsfred to the time we meet him nineteen years later in his email exchange with Zoë?
19. What do you think is the meaning of a "first love" in this novel? Compare Gunnar and Zoë's relationship to Linn and JG. Did you relate to Linn's intense and impulsive experience at Hultsfred? Do you think it's believable that she buried the memory of JG after Zoë's birth? Do you think Linn is the love of JG's life - and vice versa?
20. What do you think would have happened if Linn and JG's relationship had been consummated? What brought them together? What kind of attraction did they share? Was it purely sexual? What do you think would have happened to their relationship if they had exchanged information about each other to stay in touch?
21. Do you feel that the topic of unwanted pregnancy was handled realistically?
22. What role does music play in this novel? The Hultsfred Festival was a life-changing experience for many. Can you relate to that feeling of discovery and freedom?
23. Young adulthood is also celebrated in this novel. Can you relate to the feelings of that time in life?
24. What do you think happens after the last page of this novel is turned? What future do you see for Zoë, Linn, and JG? For Zoë and Gunnar?
25. If the book was made into a movie, who would play each of the main characters?