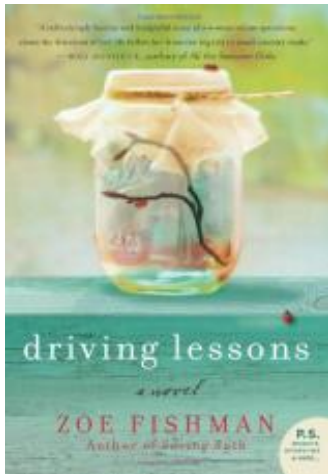


# Driving Lessons

by Zoe Fishman

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## About the Book

An executive at a New York cosmetics firm, Sarah has had her fill of the interminable hustle of the big city. When her husband, Josh, is offered a new job in suburban Virginia, it feels like the perfect chance to shift gears.

While Josh quickly adapts to their new life, Sarah discovers that having time on her hands is a mixed blessing. Without her everyday urban struggles, who is she? And how can she explain to Josh, who assumes they are on the same page, her ambivalence about starting a family?

It doesn't help that the idea of getting behind the wheel --- an absolute necessity of her new life --- makes it hard for Sarah to breathe. It's been almost 20 years since she's driven, and just the thought of merging is enough to make her teeth chatter with anxiety. When she signs up for lessons, she begins to feel a bit more like her old self again, but she's still unsure of where she wants to go.

Then a crisis involving her best friend lands Sarah back in New York --- a trip to the past filled with unexpected truths about herself, her dear friend and her seemingly perfect sister-in-law?and an astonishing surprise that will help her see the way ahead.

## Discussion Guide

1. At the beginning Sarah seems lost, despite the fact that she can claim a successful career. Can you relate to this? Would you be able to walk away from lucrative stability in pursuit of emotional fulfillment?

2. Sarah feels guilty because of her maternal uncertainties and is unable to be truthful with Josh as a result. She feels as though she is letting him down, despite the fact that she will be the one carrying the literal load for nine months. Do you think most women feel pressured by society to play the role of eager mom?
3. In the same vein, what did you think of Iris's unapologetic stance on children? Were you put off or did you admire her *chutzpah*?
4. Sarah agrees to move to Farmwood despite the fact that she has some serious driving fears. What are these fears analogous to?
5. Sarah has led a fairly workaholic lifestyle prior to Farmwood. This left some time to pine for a career she was more passionate about --- without actually allowing her the time to pursue it. Ironically, when she's unemployed and with nothing but that kind of time, she's paralyzed by the opportunity. Has this ever happened to you?
6. Sarah is plagued throughout the novel by ladybugs. Is there a metaphor here? If so, what is it?
7. Did you find Sarah's relationship with her mother to be realistic? As you approach the idea of motherhood, or as a mother yourself, what things about your own mother do you find yourself trying to emulate or avoid?
8. Sarah and Mona handle Mona's diagnosis and pending hysterectomy with a lot of humor, despite the fear and vulnerability they feel. How do you think you would react in a similar situation? And do you think Mona's fears pertain more to the diagnosis or to the results of the surgery?
9. What did you think about Kate's unabashed frankness about her pregnancy, delivery, and postpartum sex life? Could you relate or did it make you uncomfortable?
10. Do you think Sarah and Iris will indeed be friends?

## Author Bio

Zoe Fishman is the author of *DRIVING LESSONS*, *SAVING RUTH* and *BALANCING ACTS*. Her books have been translated into German, Italian, Dutch and Polish. She's the recipient of many awards, including Target's Breakout and Emerging Author Picks, a New York Post Pick, and has been featured on NBC's *Atlanta & Co.* as well as in *Publishers Weekly* and *The Huffington Post*. She is currently at work on her next novel, as well as teaching writing at the Callanwolde Fine Arts Center. Zoe lives in Atlanta with her husband and two sons.

## Critical Praise

?At turns funny and poignant, DRIVING LESSONS is a refreshingly honest and insightful story of a woman whose questions about the direction of her life follow her from the big city to small country roads.?

?Meg Donohue, author of ALL THE SUMMER GIRLS

?A wonderful, witty, and heartfelt journey through some of life?s biggest challenges: marriage, moving, making babies and more??

?Jessica Anya Blau, author of THE WONDER BREAD SUMMER

?A charming and warm story about new adventures and old friends and how this likable heroine learns to embrace them both.?

?Shelly Noble, *New York Times* bestselling author of BEACH COLORS

?Insightful and emotionally astute?Fishman demonstrates a rare gift for illuminating the interior lives of women with honesty, generosity and a whole lot of heart.?

?Jillian Medoff, bestselling author of HUNGER POINT

?Fishman effectively balances humor and tension, crafting an involving portrayal of three women coping with the idea and obstacles of motherhood.?

?*Publisher?s Weekly*

?Fishman?s sweetly told tale will resonate with readers who desire change in their lives, but it will also touch the hearts of others?believable and authentic.?

?*RT Book Reviews*

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## **Driving Lessons**

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