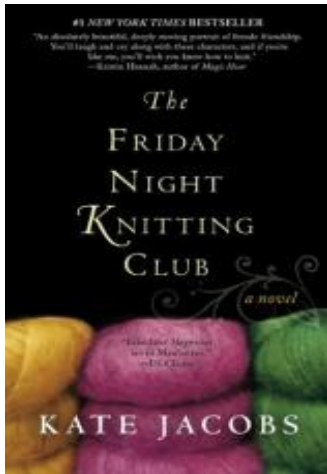


# The Friday Night Knitting Club

by Kate Jacobs



## About the Book

“To know yourself, to know your friends, all you need to do is knit.” Walker and Daughter is Georgia Walker’s little yarn shop is tucked into a quiet storefront on Manhattan’s Upper West Side. **The Friday Night Knitting Club** was improvised by some of Georgia’s regulars who had strolled into the yarn shop looking for tips on knitting and end up finding much, much more. Once a week they gather to work on their latest projects and chat—and occasionally clash—over their stories of love, life and everything else.

As a single mom in her late 30s, Georgia has her hands full juggling the demands of running the store with the challenges of raising her spunky tween daughter, Dakota. Helping her out is her mentor and dear friend, Anita, a wealthy uptown widow. The rest of the members of the Friday Night Knitting Club are just as varied as the skeins of yarn in the shop’s bins. There’s Petra, a pre-law student turned handbag designer; Darwin, a somewhat aloof grad student in women’s studies; and Lucie, a petite, quiet woman who’s harboring some secrets of her own.

Suddenly the shop’s comfortable world is shaken up: James, Georgia’s ex, wants to play a larger role in Dakota’s life—and possibly Georgia’s as well. Kat, a former friend from high school, returns to New York as a rich Park Avenue wife, and uneasily renews her old bond with Georgia. Meanwhile, Anita must confront her growing (and reciprocated) feelings for Marty, the kind neighborhood deli owner. The women’s lives gradually weave together stitch by stitch, and when the unthinkable happens, they are forced to realize what they’ve created: not just a knitting club, but a sisterhood.

## Discussion Guide

1. Why does Georgia reject her parents’ offer to house her and Dakota?
2. The role of friendships among women is a central theme of *The Friday Night Knitting Club*. Some friendships develop easily, like K.C. and Georgia’s, while others begin on unsure footing, like Darwin and Lucie’s. Cat’s insecurities create

conflicted feelings about drawing Georgia closer. Discuss the emotional baggage and issues of class that challenge trust between various women in the knitting club.

**3.** Georgia has a history of being burned by the people closest to her. Cat's decision to attend Dartmouth meant breaking a pact of friendship, and James abandoned her for another woman. Leading up to forgiveness, do you think there are moments when her defenses against intimacy and protectiveness of Dakota are excessive?

**4.** What does Anita see in Georgia that gives her the confidence to invest? Why does Georgia trust Anita, given her past relationships that went awry?

**5.** Lucie's decision to become pregnant without telling the man she conceives with is a choice that flies in the face of social convention and her mother's expectations, to say nothing of her Catholic upbringing. What factors led to her choice? How does the whole of Georgia's experience as a single mother support or undermine her decision?

**6.** Entrepreneurs, single moms, and a seventy-something undergoing a sexual reawakening?the women of the knitting club are hardly traditional, although a highly traditional woman's craft is what brings them together each Friday. Eventually Darwin decides to write her thesis about the positive impact of knitting in the lives of modern women rather than criticizing it as a "throwback" that prevents women from focusing their energy on professional success. In your opinion, which is the more feminist interpretation?

**7.** Georgia gets defensive when James asserts that he has things to teach Dakota about race that Georgia could never teach her. Is her indignation totally justified in light of James's delinquency as a father, or is there some truth to his claim?

**8.** How does Dakota's major act of rebellion (her attempt to go to Baltimore) alter Georgia and James's playing field? Do you agree with Georgia's decision on an initial trip to Scotland over a trip to Baltimore?

**9.** Before Georgia gives James a second chance, she claims to harbor "hatred lite" toward him, reasoning that she'd always heard the opposite of love is hate. When Cat's lawyer informs her that Adam wants to settle and be done with her, she's unexpectedly hurt because he's letting her walk away without a fight. Given Cat's reaction, how does indifference factor into the love/hate equation?

**10.** When Cat responds to Georgia's sincere questions about her college experience at Dartmouth by saying, "It wasn't like you think," what does she mean?

**11.** Things get interesting in Scotland when Georgia's Gran offers her loving but firm analysis of the women's lives. She points out that Cat is capable of handling stress but hasn't tried, and that Georgia's spent too much time ruminating on the past. Her advice: mistakes are made; the important thing is to decide how to react to what people offer, because you can't make them change. How do the women accept this advice in each of their lives?

**12.** If Georgia had opened the letters she received from James in a timely fashion, how might things have been different?

**13.** While James and Dakota are in Baltimore visiting his parents, Georgia decides to tell the club that she has cancer.

Why does she share her news with the knitting club before she tells her immediate family?

14. When Georgia gets diagnosed, she worries that a show of weakness will be unacceptable to Dakota, James, and others who know and love her as a pillar of strength. How do her loved ones prove her wrong?

15. In your opinion what is the main lesson of **The Friday Night Knitting Club**?

## Author Bio

Kate Jacobs grew up near Vancouver, British Columbia, in the scenic and delightfully named town of Hope (pop. 6,184). It's an area filled with friends and family and Kate loves to visit. Back then, of course, it was tremendously boring, as only home can be to a teenager. As a result, Kate begged her parents to send her to boarding school in Victoria, BC. From there she traded in her navy blazer to earn a Bachelor's degree in journalism at Carleton University in Ottawa. Next, in a fit of optimism/courage/naivete ? take your pick ? she followed it up with a move to bustling New York City (pop. 8,143,197).

The plan? Breaking into magazine publishing. First she received a Master's degree at NYU and worked at a handful of unpaid internships, then got a spot as an assistant to the Books & Fiction Editor at Redbook magazine. It was here that Kate answered multiple phones, read a ton of slush (getting to know some wonderful writers- to-be), and began to experience the impact of sharing women's stories. Around this time, Kate settled into an apartment complex that housed about as many people as her entire hometown in Canada: It seemed that she wasn't just a small-town girl anymore.

Professionally, Kate made it a priority to explore content that resonated with women: She was an editor at Working Woman and Family Life and was later a freelance writer and editor at the website for Lifetime Television. Personally, as a newcomer to New York, she learned the power of building a surrogate family and stitching together friendship connections that will endure. Exploring the richness of women's relationships is a key focus of her novels, **KNIT TWO**, **THE FRIDAY NIGHT KNITTING CLUB** and **COMFORT FOOD**.

After a decade of Manhattan living, Kate recently moved to Southern California with her husband. (And discovered that she likes suburban living just fine, thank you very much.)

She relished the idea of her very own home office but found herself setting up the laptop on the dining table, just as she'd done in New York, and writing late at night in her pajamas.

A firm believer in the creative power of free time, Kate loves to recharge by tackling knitting projects that she can finish quickly (all the better to feel that sense of accomplishment). She's also a fan of taking naps, especially when she's on deadline, snuggling under a favorite green-and-yellow afghan knitted by her grandmother decades ago. Her beloved liver-and-white English Springer Spaniel, Baxter, often snoozes alongside.

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