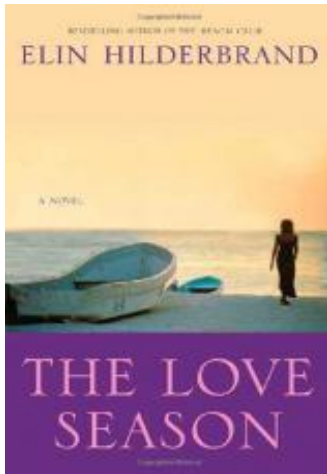


# The Love Season

by Elin Hilderbrand

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## About the Book

When Renata, newly engaged to a wealthy Nantucket summer boy, comes to the island to visit her fiance's family, she decides to confront her tragic past. She goes against her father's wishes and visits Marguerite, the godmother she's been forbidden to see her entire life--the one person who can unlock the mystery surrounding her mother's untimely death. But Marguerite's life is not so simple and preparing dinner for her god-daughter proves much more complicated than either of them imagined.

Whether it is in her Nantucket detail, her insight into the emotional dramas that shape people's lives, the moments that define them, or the loves who rule them, Elin Hilderbrand's storytelling abilities soar to new heights with every novel she writes.

## Discussion Guide

1. What is the love season? Is it a place in time? An environment? A feeling? Take a moment to discuss the meaning of the title.
2. A show of hands: Who has been to the island of Nantucket? How is it similar or different than portrayed in **The Love Season**? Others: Does this book make you want to go there for a visit?
3. The action in **The Love Season** centers around two elaborate meals: the one Marguerite prepares for Renata, and the dinner party at the Driscoll's. What is the significance of food??how it's prepared, served, and appreciated??in **The Love Season**? Discuss the dynamics, and politics, of the dining table.

4. In what ways is reading a good novel like eating a good meal? Are readers ever truly satisfied at "The End"? Or are they always left hungry for more?
5. What are the themes of hunger and nourishment that resonate throughout Marguerite's life? And in this novel?
6. Renata believed that Marguerite was like a shipwreck--she had, somewhere within her hull, a treasure trove of information about Candace. Do you think, in the end, that Renata found the answers she was looking for? Can one individual ever reveal the "truth" about another's life? How is it possible to discover someone's essence after death?
7. Talk about the characters' lives off the island of Nantucket--in Paris, Morocco, and New York City. What did these outside locations reveal about the inner lives of Marguerite, Candace, and Renata respectively?
8. During a moment of romantic desperation, the younger Marguerite had asked herself: Did love fall into categories, or was it a continuum? Were there right ways to love and wrong ways, or was there just love and its object? How might the more "modern" Renata answer these questions? How would you?
9. Discuss the symbolism of Renoir's *Les Parapluies* painting as it's represented and referenced in the book. (You may wish to have a reproduction of it on hand during your meeting as well.)
10. Marguerite, during her early visits with Porter, played a game called "One Word." What word would each member of your group use to describe **The Love Season**?

## Author Bio

Elin Hilderbrand is the author of 30 novels, including her latest, *SWAN SONG*, which is her final Nantucket novel. She is a proud 1991 graduate of Johns Hopkins University where she majored in Writing Seminars. In her senior year at Hopkins, Elin had her first short story, "Misdirection," accepted for publication in *Seventeen Magazine*.

After a short stint working in publishing and teaching in New York City, she moved to Nantucket permanently in 1994. She attended the University of Iowa writers workshop and earned her MFA in 1998, and published her first novel, *THE BEACH CLUB*, in the summer of 2000. *SUMMER OF '69* was her first novel to debut at #1 on the *New York Times* bestseller list. She is the mother of three children and loves riding the Peloton, cooking and going to the beach.

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## **The Love Season**

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