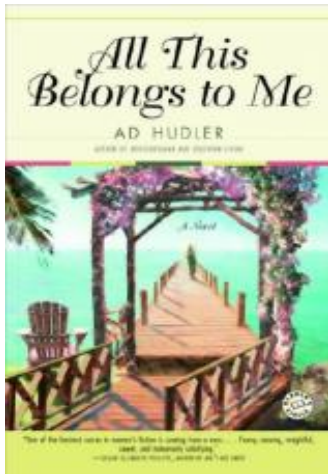


# All This Belongs to Me

by Ad Hudler

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## About the Book

An often hilarious, always moving novel that explores love and fate and the ways we lie to ourselves to get by in a sometimes overwhelming world.

When a mishap in the mail brings Geena into Ellis's life, neither realizes how much they need each other. With her marriage in tatters, Geena is still recovering from the sudden loss of her son. Ellis has been alone in the world since the death of his mother, and as he approaches his twilight years, the routine of everyday life has replaced the relationships he might once have known. When that routine is thrown into disarray by changes at the Thomas Edison estate, where Ellis works as a tour guide, he is lost until Geena brings courage and independence back into his life. For Geena, caring for Ellis is the salve on her own wounds.

In a fascinating tale of fate and second chances, Ad Hudler weaves an intricate web showing the importance of friendship, family, and the need to accept one another, flaws and all.

## Discussion Guide

1. Knowing what you know about the evolution of Ellis, what would have happened to him had he lived?
2. Chance plays a large role in the novel. Does Geena's serendipitous reunion with her husband cross the line between believable chance and artistic contrivance?
3. Is Judith a protagonist or an antagonist?

4. During the novel Geena moves out from a cloud of grief to a clarity of living. What were key moments that pulled her back into reality?
5. In the course of the novel, Geena does some very unscrupulous, mean things, such as using Ellis' credit card for expensive pedicures. Could you, would you have done the same thing in the same situation? How did she justify such behaviors? How aware was she of her actions? And did this awareness change over the course of the novel?
6. How does Geena deal with grief over her son's death? At times she uses humor, other times anger, at other times conspicuous consumption. How and why would retail therapy help Geena? How does it help you?
7. The author has described this as "a love story of sorts." If that's true, who are the characters in love?
8. How did Ellis' relationship with his mother influence his dealings with other women?
9. A sub-title for the novel could be, "A Tale of Identity Theft." Besides the obvious credit-card scam, what are some other examples in the novel of one person stealing or borrowing another person's identity?
10. After a lifetime of little change, Ellis begins to grow for the first time in his life. Discuss the women in his life and the roles they played in enabling him to grow.
11. What did Geena get from Safe-T-Man? Should every woman have a Safe-T-Man?

## **Author Bio**

I grew up on the High Plains of Eastern Colorado, in a four-generation newspaper family. I started cleaning toilets and sweeping up around the presses when I was nine and started writing for the paper when I was in my mid teens. My mother was the only feminist in Eastern Colorado, and early on she had us boycotting products that were endorsed by anyone who spoke out against the proposed Equal Rights Amendment. My fiction often features strong women, no doubt attributable to my mother's influence.

From there, I studied art history and journalism at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln and, after graduating, got my first job with the newspaper in Fort Myers, Florida. I was a lowly reporter when I met my wife Carol, the advertising director and a Kansas native. Eight years older than me and in management, she was forbidden fruit, but I was inexplicably drawn to her and began to pursue in earnest.

We married, Carol soon gave birth to Haley Joy, and our family began moving across the country (Rochester, New York; St. Paul, Minnesota) as Carol trained for her dream job of newspaper publisher. I stayed home with our daughter and wrote freelance magazine articles.

Carol landed her first publisher job in Macon, Georgia, and it was living in this beautiful, quirky city that first inspired me to write fiction. We've since returned to Fort Myers, where we live in a 1951 ranch-style home on the Caloosahatchee River. Carol is publisher of the paper where we met, and I'm still the primary caregiver of the family. I try to get my writing done while my daughter's at school. Fiction writing and housework complement each other well; one is brain-intensive, the other is brain-dead, and after struggling on a paragraph for twenty minutes, folding the white

load provides a welcome respite.

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## **Critical Praise**

"This heartwarming novel radiates wit and charm."

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### **All This Belongs to Me**

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