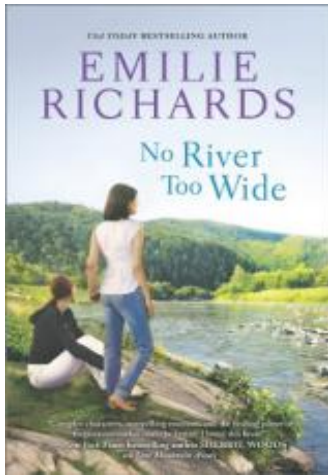


# No River Too Wide

by Emilie Richards

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## About the Book

Some betrayals are like rivers, so deep, so wide, they can't be crossed. But --- for those with enough courage --- forgiveness, redemption and love may be found on the other side.

On the night her home is consumed by fire, Janine Stoddard finally resolves to leave her abusive husband. While she is reluctant to involve her estranged daughter, she can't resist a chance to see Harmony and baby Lottie in Asheville, North Carolina, before she disappears forever.

Harmony's friend Taylor Martin realizes how much the reunited mother and daughter yearn to stay together, and she sees in Jan a chance to continue her own mother's legacy of helping women in need of a fresh start. She opens her home, even as she's opening her heart to another newcomer, Adam Pryor. But enigmatic Adam has a secret that could destroy Taylor's trust?and cost Jan her hard-won freedom.

## Discussion Guide

1. Three different women in NO RIVER TOO WIDE experience very different relationships with the men in their lives: Jan, who is escaping a long-term abusive marriage; Taylor, who is finally able to think about having a man in her life; Harmony, who is trying to fall in love with the perfect guy. Did their struggles remind you of relationships or situations that you or friends have experienced?

2. Taylor, who was a major character in ONE MOUNTAIN AWAY, the first *Goddesses Anonymous* book, has a problem trusting and forgiving. Knowing this, and being confronted about this problem by people she respects, leads her to make a difficult choice at the novel's end. Do you think she took a big personal step? Under these circumstances, could you have taken the same one?

3. Harmony, who has hoped for nothing more than to see her mother freed from her abusive marriage, discovers that now that her mother appears safe, her resentment toward Jan for not leaving sooner begins to surface. Was it realistic to you that her own feelings about her childhood would appear and need to be dealt with?
4. Before reading *NO RIVER TOO WIDE*, were you aware that 1.3 million women are physically assaulted by their domestic partners every year? Although this was only one aspect of the novel, are you more aware of the scope of the problem now and more aware of what signs to watch out for in new relationships?
5. Were Jan's podcasts helpful in understanding the way Rex slowly and carefully entrapped her in their marriage? At what point would an older, more experienced woman have begun to suspect Rex might become an abusive spouse?
6. Domestic abuse is one of the most chronically underreported crimes. Women who have not personally experienced this sometimes find it difficult to understand why women stay with men who abuse them. Was Jan's predicament realistic? Were her reasons for being trapped in a marriage to Rex believable enough that you could understand them?
7. The women who call themselves Goddesses Anonymous try to reach out in whatever way is needed to women who need them. In what ways did they reach out to Jan? How helpful were they?
8. The female truckers in the novel who call themselves Moving On are fictional, but there are many women who reach out to help others affected by domestic violence. Throughout the world women have created shelters and help lines, as well as given legal and financial assistance. Do you know women who help in this way? Is there a program to help in your own community?
9. Rivers run through many of our lives, not just geographic rivers, but rivers of feeling. Did the metaphor of the river and what it represented to Jan remind you of personal rivers you've had to cross or dive into?
10. How likely is it that Jan will recover from two decades of an abusive marriage and go on to live a satisfying life? Do you think she's taken the first steps by the time the book ends?

## Author Bio

Emilie Richards' many novels feature complex characterizations and in-depth explorations of social issues, a result of her training and experience as a family counselor, which contribute to her fascination with relationships of all kinds. Emilie, a mother of four, lives with her husband in Florida, where she is currently working on her next novel.

Photo Credit: Galen McGee

## Critical Praise

Richards deftly juggles an intriguing thriller with an exploration of domestic violence and reinvention. Still, it's the quirky, gritty characters in and out of Goddesses Anonymous --- all determined to help women in need --- who power

this tale of forgiveness every step of the way.?

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## **No River Too Wide**

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