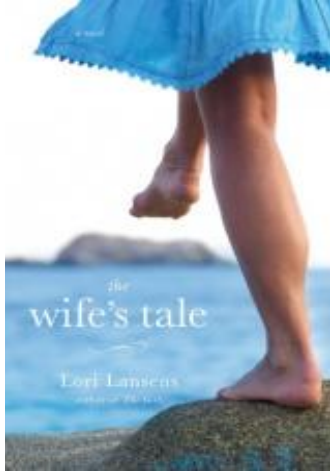


The Wife's Tale

by Lori Lansens



About the Book

On the eve of their Silver Anniversary, Mary Gooch's husband disappears and she begins a desperate search. For the first time in her life, she boards a plane and flies across the country to find her lost husband. So used to hiding from the world, Mary finds that she is forced to look up from the pavement. Through it all, Mary not only finds kindred spirits, but reunites with a more intimate stranger no longer sequestered by fear and habit: herself.

Discussion Guide

1. Mary Gooch is described as being a "devotee" of the tyranny of beauty. What role does beauty play in the novel? How do Mary's attitudes toward beauty evolve?
2. Unlike his wife at the beginning of the novel, Jimmy Gooch takes an active interest in the outside world. How would you explain Mary's indifference in the face of Jimmy's enthusiasm?
3. To what extent is Mary ruled by fear? What keeps her afraid?
4. What are the different types of hunger in the book, and how do they interplay? What do you think drives Mary's hunger?
5. At times Mary falls prey to superstition, but she also holds on to a belief in miracles. Are there religious overtones to the book? What do you think its spiritual message is, if there is one?
6. As a child, Mary is drawn to a teacher named Ms. Bolt, who has a very different take on womanhood than she's used to. What does Ms. Bolt teach Mary? Do you think Mary loses sight of her lessons?

7. Despite loathing her own body at times, Mary is a very sensual person, and she is powerfully attracted to her husband. Why does she resist him, even when he is desperate for physical connection with her?
8. Why do you think Gooch chooses this moment --- their 25th anniversary --- to leave?
9. A theme of the book is the nourishment that novels can provide (especially as opposed to tabloids). How does Mary's reading relate to her eating? Did this theme resonate for you as you were reading **The Wife's Tale**?
10. Far away from home, Mary meets Big Avi, the driver for Miracle Limousine Service. What do you think of the role Big Avi plays in the book? How would you explain his kindness?
11. What are the different ways in which the themes of gain and loss are used in the book?
12. Mary keeps a terrible secret, which she later learns might not have been as secret as she thought. What does **The Wife's Tale** have to say about keeping secrets from those we love?
13. How is Mary transformed at the end of the book? Where will she be five years from now?

Author Bio

Lori Lansens is the author of RUSH HOME ROAD, which was translated into eight languages and published in 11 countries, and THE GIRLS, which was sold in 13 territories and featured as a book club pick by Richard & Judy in the UK. She was born and raised in Chatham, Ontario, and now makes her home in Los Angeles with her husband and two children.

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Publication Date: February 10, 2010

Genres: Fiction

Hardcover: 368 pages

Publisher: Little, Brown and Company

ISBN-10: 0316069310

ISBN-13: 9780316069311