

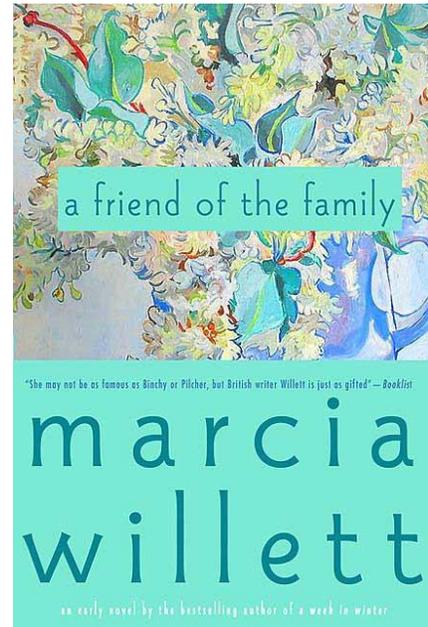
READING GROUP GUIDE

A Friend of the Family

By *Marcia Willett*

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About this Guide

The following author biography and list of questions about *A Friend of the Family* are intended as resources to aid individual readers and book groups who would like to learn more about the author and this book. We hope that this guide will provide you a starting place for discussion, and suggest a variety of perspectives from which you might approach *A Friend of the Family*.

About the Book

"Deservedly compared to Binchy and Pilcher, Willett is an equally gifted storyteller." --*Booklist on The Birdcage*

A Friend of the Family picks up the story of Kate Webster and Cass Wivenhoe that began with *First Friends* (St. Martin's Griffin, Spring 2005). Here the action includes one of their friends, Felicity Mainwaring, a middle-aged married woman who has been dallying with George Lampeter, another mutual friend. When Felicity is widowed, everyone expects George to pop the question. He does, but to the astonishment of Kate and Cass, his intended bride is not Felicity.

With her usual generous helpings of tears and laughter, Marcia Willett again provides her fans with a treat to be savored.



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About the Author

Born in Somerset, in the west country of England, **Marcia Willett** was the youngest of five girls. Her family was unconventional and musical, but Marcia chose to train as a ballet dancer. Unfortunately, her body did not develop with the classic proportions demanded by the Royal Ballet, so she studied to be a ballet teacher. Her first husband was a naval officer in the submarine service; their son, Charles, is now married and a clergyman. Her second husband, Rodney, himself a writer and broadcaster, encouraged Marcia to write fiction. This is the second of several of her early novels that are being published by Thomas Dunne Books; her more recent novels include *A Week in Winter*, *A Summer in the Country*, *The Children's Hour*, and *The Birdcage*.

Discussion Questions

1. In what ways is the importance of honesty a major theme in this novel?
2. What is the significance of the quote “Joy cometh in the morning” on page 115?
3. Why does Felicity’s attempted blackmail scheme fail?
4. Why is Percy so important to Thea and her story?
5. In what other Marcia Willett novels are Cass and Kate prominently featured? And how are they different or the same in other novels?
6. In what ways does Marcia Willett capture the problems many lovers have in establishing trust?
7. Why is Thea such a good mate for George?
8. Marcia Willett is particularly skilled at representing relationships in which one character is much older than the other. How is that skill illustrated in this novel?
9. At what moment of the novel did you most fear that Thea and George’s relationship would fail?
10. What does the novel say to you about friendship and family?

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