

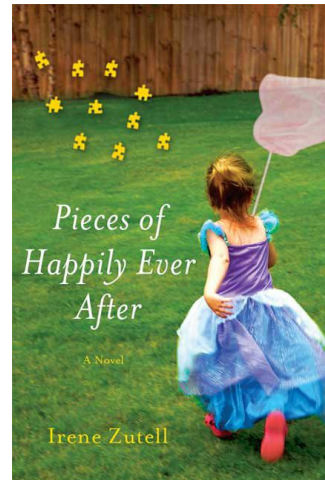
# READING GROUP GUIDE

## Pieces of Happily Ever After

By Irene Zutell

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### About this Guide

The following author biography and list of questions about *Pieces of Happily Ever After* 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 *Pieces of Happily Ever After*.

### About the Book

What happens *after* “happily ever after?” Alice Hirsh is about to find out...

Alice, a former New Yorker who thought she’d never feel at home in the bizarre world of the San Fernando Valley, was adapting, raising her 5-year-old daughter while trying to keep her job and make her new house a home. When her attorney husband lands a trophy client – box-office queen Rose Maris – things begin to look up. Then Alex starts working late – a lot. He crunches his paunch into a six-pack and trades his Gap ensembles for Armani everything.

Soon, Rose and Alex’s affair blazes in the tabloids and Alice is plunged into trash-gossip hell. Her life crumbles around her as she navigates her newly single self through suburban LA -- a place rife with porn stars, psycho soccer moms and nutty neighbors.

Is there a chance to wrest Alex from the Sexiest Woman Alive? And if so... would Alice want him back? And what about George--her college sweetheart? Or Johnny, a walking charm-bomb paparazzo? As Alice inventories the rubble of her life, she desperately searches for her bearings and is forced to ask herself what she really wants from life, love and herself.



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## About the Author

Irene Zutell began her career as a journalist. She has written for *People*, *Us Weekly*, *The New York Times*, the *NY Daily News*, *Newsday*, *USA Today* and others. She lives in Los Angeles with her husband and two children.

## Discussion Questions

1. How does Ally manage her relationship with her daughter while the rest of her life is in turmoil? Do you think she does a good job? How does Gabby deal with the changes in her parents' marriage? Does she grow over the course of the novel?
2. Gabby believes that life imitates fairy tales. From her perspective, what roles would various characters from the novel play? In what ways do these characters embody (or not embody) the parts in Gabby's fairy tale?
3. Faye accuses Ally of judging people too quickly. Do you agree with her? Did you judge any of the characters in this book too quickly, then change your mind? Who, and why?
4. Do you think adults are capable of making drastic change in their lives? What characters in the novel change the most? How?
5. What do you think of Ally's decision not to take Rose's money? What would you have done?
6. How would you describe Alex? Although he may not be the best husband, is he a good father? A good man?
7. "Xander" tells Ally that maybe it's best not to expose Gabby to her grandmother. Is he right? What do you think of her decision to have her mother live at home? What would you do? How does her decision affect Gabby? Ally?
8. What happens to Ally when George's phone rings? Why do you think she decides to walk away? Did she do the right thing? What would you have done? Does George still love her or was it something else?
9. Is Johnny a good match for Ally? Is he trustworthy? Where do you see them a year later?
10. What do you think of Ally's idea of happiness being in the small moments that we often take for granted? What is happiness for Ally? For Gabby? For you?

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