

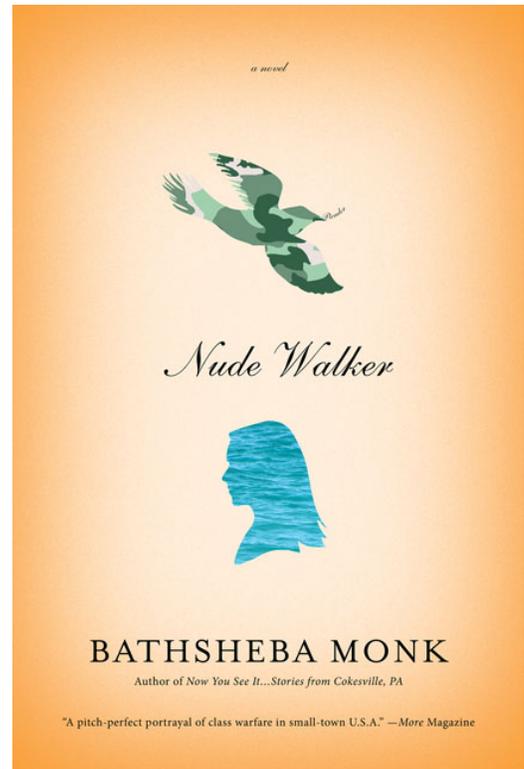
READING GROUP GUIDE

Nude Walker

A Novel

by **Bathsheba Monk**

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About this Guide

The following author biography and list of questions about *Nude Walker* 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 *Nude Walker*.

About the Book

Set in Warrensides, Pennsylvania, *Nude Walker* is the story of forbidden love seen through the prism of post-industrial America. When Kat Warren-Bineki, the daughter of old industrialists, and Max Asad, the son of Lebanese immigrants, return from Afghanistan, where they both served in the National Guard, the two share a series of intriguing encounters that lead to a romance that will change them forever.

Bathsheba Monk writes in a voice as true as it is disarming, depicting the kaleidoscopic tensions between generations and cultures.

About the Author

Bathsheba Monk is the author of *Now You See It . . . Stories from Cokesville, PA*. She lives in Pennsylvania, where she is writing her next novel and developing a musical. She writes radio essays and interviews other artists on National Public Radio's Lehigh Valley affiliate, WDIY. Visit her online at www.bathshebamonk.com.

Discussion Questions

***Nude Walker* is a tapestry of overlapping love stories.**

1. Four couples—Kat and Max, Wind and Cantwell, Duck and Jenna, and Barbara and Pablo—experience forbidden love. None of these couples last half a year. Is all forbidden love doomed?
2. Everyone talks about the “chemistry” between people, and Barbara goes on at some length about the chemical nature of her sexual attraction to both Mike and Pablo. Do other characters in the book experience a chemical attraction?
3. Is a forbidden love partner, perhaps, more exciting?
4. Dr. Asad talks about his pure, passionate love for his first wife and says that you can never replicate that kind of love. Is pure passionate love only possible in the young? Can you sustain that kind of passionate love as an adult?
5. On the bus home from Ft. Dix, Kat sees a sign on the lawn of a church that says, “I know everything about you, but I still love you anyway. Signed, God.” She thinks that’s why she doesn’t love Duck, “Because, what kind of love is it that doesn’t see your flaws and hold you accountable? What exactly is it that such an indiscriminate lover loves? How jealous is he that he wouldn’t want you to be the best possible thing you could be?” Do you think that real love is blind to flaws?
6. What do you think makes Kat fall in love with Max?
7. What do you think makes Max fall in love with Kat?
8. Kat says that Duck has been her protector since she was six years old, that he kept her safe and wrapped her within their cocoon. Do you think that kind of love is more lasting, more real even, than the passion she experiences with Max?

Families and expectations of families play a big role in *Nude Walker*.

1. Dr. Asad says that it takes many generations to prepare a life that can be successfully led. But Max thinks, “Families are jails. Even if they’re comfortable jails.” Which position do you think is true? Can both be true?
2. Why is Duck so anxious to make it work with Kat?
3. Jenna wants to reclaim her daughter. Do you think it’s moral to seek out a child you gave up for adoption?
4. Both Max and Wind want to have their family and their heritage, but they also want to be themselves. Is that possible?

Everybody is changing in *Nude Walker*. A time of transition is now a permanent condition, as the pundits say.

1. What is keeping Barbara mired in the past, from changing?
2. Both Max and Kat seem anxious to change the roles that have been given them: Max his role of privilege and Kat her status. Why are they so intent on giving these roles up? Would you?
3. After Wind's father dies, Wind seems at a loss. She is trying to change into something, but she doesn't know what. How does Cantwell fit into all that?
4. Duck feels he has to change when Kat rejects him, when Warrenside itself rejects him. Is it possible to change if you stay in the same place? Or did Duck have to leave Warrenside?
5. Dr. Asad says that most immigrants have endured such terrible hardships—which is what brought them here—that starting over in the ruins of a giant industry is not the tragedy to them that is to the heirs of Warrenside—most of whom keep waiting for Warrenside to return to its former industrial self. Do you see any parallels between Dr. Asad and Malcolm Warren?
6. Is change always a good thing? Is it inevitable?

A recurring motif in *Nude Walker* is the idea of luck.

1. Dr. Asad thinks he is extremely lucky and cites the fact that he made it out of Beirut alive and is now prospering in Warrenside. Do you agree that he is lucky?
2. Is luck random? Is luck earned or is it a gift?
3. Do you think Barbara is lucky? Mike? Wind? Who is the luckiest character in *Nude Walker*?



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