

# READING GROUP GUIDE

## Double Time

By Jane Roper

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### About this Guide

The following author biography and list of questions about *Double Time* 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 *Double Time*.

### About the Book

*What do you do when you find out you're pregnant – times two?!*

When Jane Roper found out she was pregnant with twins, she searched high and low for a memoir of the first years with multiples, but came up empty-handed. Four years later, she wrote the book she wished she'd had as a new mother of twins.

*Double Time* is an entertaining, up-close, and very personal look at Jane Roper's first three years raising twin daughters. From trying to get pregnant to processing the idea of twins, from round-the-clock feedings and diaper changes to the joy of watching “twinteractions” between her girls as their (very different!) personalities emerge, Jane tells all. Meanwhile, she struggles to keep a history of depression under control—and find answers when her symptoms get worse. All this while falling steadily in love with her duo as they grow from sleepy newborns to mischievous toddlers with a penchant for potty talk.

Full of warmth, honesty, occasional advice, and more than a little humor, *Double Time* is a smart and engaging account of the first three years with multiples, as well as a refreshingly candid and vulnerable look at parenting, clinical depression, and the quest for work-family balance. It's Jane



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Roper's story, but it's one that will resonate with countless women—especially those parenting in double time.

## About the Author

Jane Roper writes the popular Baby Squared blog on Babble.com and is the author of *Eden Lake*, a novel. Her writing has appeared in *Poets & Writers*, *Salon*, *Slate*, and *The Rumpus*, among other publications, and she holds an MFA from the Iowa Writer's Workshop. Jane lives in the Boston area with her husband, singer-songwriter Alastair Moock, and their twin daughters.

## Discussion Questions

1. On the most literal level the title, *Double Time*, refers to the fact that Jane has twins. But are there other themes or aspects of the author's experiences that the title addresses?
2. When Jane found out she was pregnant with twins, she had many fears and apprehensions about how becoming a mother of twins would change her life. Do you think those fears were justified? Do they apply to any expectant mother, or do you think they are unique to moms of multiples?
3. When did you first "fall in love" with your child or children? Were your feelings of love instantaneous, or did they develop over time, as was the case for Jane?
4. Some of the twin parenting challenges Jane describes, such as avoiding comparisons and finding time to spend alone with each of her girls, could just as easily be faced by parents with children of different ages. Do you think these challenges are more difficult or complex with twins?
5. Jane writes of the "hyperparenting zeitgeist" among people in her socioeconomic group of college-educated, urban-dwelling professionals. Have you experienced or felt pressured by this phenomenon? In what ways and to what extent do you think Jane is influenced by this trend?
6. Jane's husband Alastair had experienced clinical depression himself, and was extremely supportive and understanding when her depression resurfaced and worsened. How do you think her experience might have been different if this hadn't been the case? Have you ever had a friend or loved one with serious depression? Or, if you've suffered from depression yourself, how has the support of friends and family, or lack thereof, affected your experience?
7. When Jane is diagnosed as being on the bipolar spectrum, she fears the stigma of the illness. Do you agree that there is a stigma associated with bipolar disorder? How are attitudes toward bipolar and other mood disorders changing?



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8. The dedication of *Double Time* reads “For Elsa and Clio, of course.” How do you think Elsa and Clio might react to this book once they’re old enough to read it?
  
9. Jane shares the comments of a reader of her blog who says she’s tired of the “chorus of privileged, complaining women” talking about the challenge of balancing work and home. Do you agree with the commenter’s point of view?
  
10. Would you ultimately agree with the book’s subtitle that Jane “mostly thrived” through her first three years as a mother?

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