

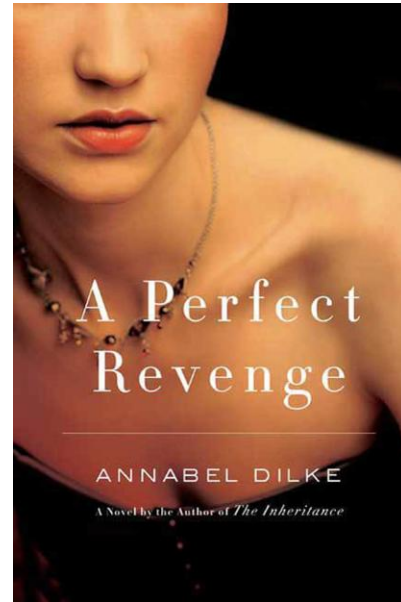
READING GROUP GUIDE

A Perfect Revenge

By Annabel Dilke

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About this Guide

The following author biography and list of questions about *A Perfect Revenge* 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 Perfect Revenge*.

About the Book

From the author of *The Inheritance* and *Secret Relations* comes a Romeo and Juliet tale centering on a wonderful old English ancestral home that had once been a Cistercian abbey.

Almost a year on from the loss of their precious abbey, the Delancey family remains devastated. The abbey had been the uninterrupted home of Delanceys since the sixteenth century. To compound the insult, they have lost it to their archenemies: the family of their old gardener, Stanley Trafford---who was dismissed and evicted, along with his family, by Laura's grandfather Edmund in 1947. But now Stanley's son is a millionaire, intent on avenging his father. . . . Stanley Trafford and Edmund Delancey were boyhood friends. When both men married, just before the war, the couples became inseparable, with the two women---Hester and Effie---offering comfort to each other while their husbands fought in the same regiment. So what really happened on that fateful morning in 1947, to poison their friendship for nearly forty years? This magical story follows two warring families---the Traffords and the Delanceys---over the course of one devastating year, in which old secrets catch them up and turn everything upside down.



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About the Author

Annabel Dilke is a novelist, journalist, and screenwriter whose books have been shortlisted for numerous awards. She is the author of *The Inheritance* and *Secret Relations*. She lives in South London.

Discussion Questions

1. What defines a person as “working class” or “upper class?”
2. In the Britain of the 80s described in the book, could anyone brought up “working class” ever have become accepted as “upper class?”
3. Does a form of class system operate in the United States, too, even though it is essentially a meritocracy?
4. The British writer Neville Shute suggested in *Requiem for a Wren* that until everyone who’d served in World War II was dead, there was a real risk of another war because for so many people those young years (which had brought a new freedom) had been the best of their lives. Do you agree or disagree that war can be a positive experience?
5. Is there such a thing as “bad blood,” and what does it really mean?
6. If Sam Delancey had been brought up by his real father, Stanley Trafford, would he have been quite different?
7. Who is your favorite character, and why?
8. Who is your least favorite character, and why?
9. Do you think Laura and Joe can ever become good friends?
10. Is Edmund’s inability to express his love for Stanley influenced more by the attitude toward homosexuality in the forties than by character and class?
11. Is it better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all?
12. What would be an alternative ending to the book?

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