

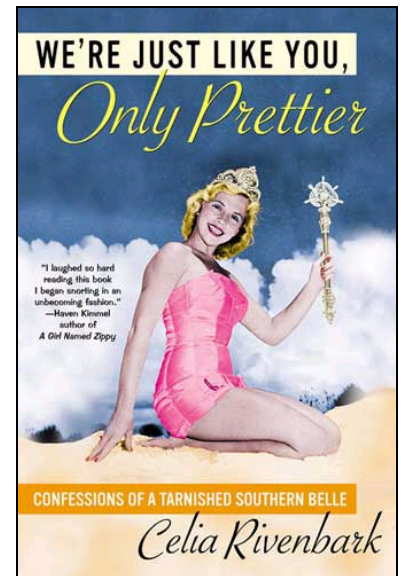
# READING GROUP GUIDE

## *We're Just Like You, Only Prettier* by Celia Rivenbark

St. Martin's Press

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### *Introduction to We're Just Like You, Only Prettier*

"On the short drive to the preschool,  
I dutifully unwrap a NutriGrain bar and  
toss it into the back seat to my four-year-old.  
Sometimes I'll even unwrap one for myself.  
Studies have shown that it's very important  
for families to eat together. . . ."

Why couldn't the Sopranos survive living down South? Simple. You can't shoot a guy full of holes after eating chicken and pastry, spoon bread, okra, and tomatoes.

What does a Southern woman consider grounds for divorce? When Daddy takes the kids out in public dressed in pajama tops and Tweety Bird swim socks. Again.

What is the Southern woman's opinion of a new "fat virus" theory? Bring it on! We've got a lot of skinny friends we need to sneeze on.

Want to become honest-to-Jesus white trash? Spend two weeks' salary on hair extensions and pancake makeup for your three-year-old so she can win a five-dollar trophy in the Wee Tiny Miss pageant and the adoration of, well, nobody much.

What does the Southern woman think of Paul McCartney's marriage to a model thirty years younger? We're not surprised. Statistically speaking, it's almost impossible for billionaires to discover that their soulmates are fifty-five and restocking the shampoo end caps at Kmart.

In this wickedly funny follow-up to her bestselling *Bless Your Heart, Tramp*, Celia Rivenbark welcomes you, once again, to the south she loves, the land of "Mama and them's," "precious and dahlin'," and mommies who mow. Ya'll come back now, you hear.

### **Praise for *We're Just Like You, Only Prettier***

"I loved Celia's book; it made me want to get myself a doublewide, head on down to Mama and them's, and start mowing my own lawn. I never knew that Southern folk had time set aside from cooking the best food in the world to grow such marvelous senses of humor. For a Yankee like me, Southern life has always been fascinating, but who knew it was so pants-wetting funny (like watching a hillbilly bang his head repeatedly on the door of the outhouse, because I've seen that, you know)? And there's also the mention of 'making doody,' which is always a shoo-in for me. Celia's book rocks; everyone is going to love it.

P.S.: How much prettier is she than me?"

- Laurie Notaro, author of *The Idiot Girls' Action Adventure Club*

"When the aliens come to study us, I hope they find Celia Rivenbark's work prominently displayed. She is one of our greatest domestic anthropologists, digging up and airing all those things we like to think others don't know. In other words, *the truth*. She knows the South and she knows women, but that's just the tip of it all. I think she might very well know *everything*. I don't know when I have laughed so loud and so long. I am forever a devoted fan."

- Jill McCorkle, author of *Creatures of Habit*

"Celia Rivenbark's collection of essays, *We're Just Like You, Only Prettier*, is a must-read for anybody who wants a funny, no-holds-barred look at today's South, from white trash in all its glorious permutations, to Yuppiedom."

- Haywood Smith, author of *The Red Hat Club*

"I laughed so hard reading this book, I began snorting in an unbecoming fashion. I loved it nonetheless. I'll be sending copies to everyone, especially my baby's daddy."

- Haven Kimmel, author of *A Girl Named Zippy*

"I thought I was Southern until I read Celia Rivenbark's book. . . . What a funny, smart, and irreverent writer she is!"

- Lee Smith, author of *The Last Girls*

### **Reading Group Guide Questions**

1. Although written from a Southern woman's perspective, do you believe that most of the book's comic themes translate easily to non-Southerners? In other words, do Minnesota dads also have difficulty dressing their children properly?
2. The author admits that she adores Southern men, even the mullet headed ones. What characteristics do they possess that you find charming and endearing? Which traits do you find dated and exasperating?

3. The author paints a portrait of the Southern woman as a highly competitive creature. What cultural or historical influences may have led to this trait? Why do you think so many Southern women compete in beauty pageants, talent contests, and even recipe contests?
4. Do you find the slow and soft speech pattern of Southerners irritating or charming? Do you think that a slow drawl indicates that the speaker is a bit dim? Do you believe that a woman's Southern drawl can be used effectively to manipulate others, particularly men?
5. There are many references to being "raised right." Do you believe that Southerners are more apt to punish their children than non-Southern parents? Why or why not?
6. So many non-Southerners derive their knowledge of what Southern folk are like by the images on TV and in films. What are the most memorable Southern characters you recall? Do you think that Hollywood perpetuates a stereotype that Southerners are lazy and slow? Can you remember any major movies in which the brainy heroine is a Southern woman?
7. This book is called "laugh-out-loud funny." Which part made you laugh out loud and why? Does the author's humor remind you of anyone else? How so?
8. Although this book resonates with women readers more than men, many women have read aloud portions to their husbands and boyfriends. Are there specific parts of the book that you think appeal to men?

## About the Author

**Celia Rivenbark** is the author of *Bless Your Heart, Tramp*. She writes a weekly column, "From the Belle Tower," for the *Sun News* in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. She lives in Wilmington, North Carolina, with her husband and daughter.