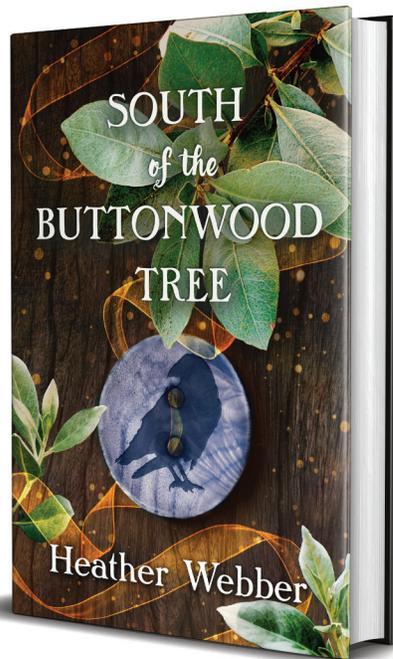


READING GROUP GUIDE



HEATHER WEBBER

is the nationally bestselling author of more than thirty novels—including *Midnight at the Blackbird Café*, the Lucy Valentine novels, and the Nina Quinn Mysteries—and has been twice nominated for an Agatha Award. She loves to spend time with her family, read, drink too much coffee and tea, birdwatch, crochet, watch cooking competition and home improvement shows, and bake. Heather lives in southwestern Ohio and is hard at work on her next book.

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1. If you could ask the Buttonwood Tree one question, what would you ask?
2. Would you rather have Sarah Grace's ability to communicate with houses or Blue's ability to find lost things with the wind's help? Why?
3. The people in Buttonwood shape their lives in response to the Buttonwood Tree's answers, either fighting against them or trying to live up to them. Do you think it helped them to know the answers to their questions or would they have been better off not knowing?
4. Do you believe people who don't follow the Buttonwood Tree's advice are really cursed or are they just unhappy because they've chosen the wrong path? In other words, does the Buttonwood Tree curse them or do they curse themselves?
5. "What they didn't know hadn't hurt them. It had only hurt me" (p. 28). Grudges and family secrets are a huge part of this story, and they only ever seem to cause harm. Is there ever a grudge or a secret worth keeping?
6. What do all the various townfolks' opinions of Blue Bishop mean to you? Do you think they say more about Blue, the individuals who tell each story, or the town as a whole?



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7. Most of the town thinks the Bishops are no good. Now that you know some of the reasons behind their choices—hunger, illness, protecting the helpless—what do you think of how they reacted to their situations?
8. Blue is only able to forgive her family when she knows why they acted the way they did. Do you think Blue should have forgiven them before she knew their reasons or was she right to wait until she knew the full story?
9. On page 223, when Moe is dying, Marlo says, “I’d rather go with him, Blue, than live without him. I’ve been at his side for more than fifty years, so long I can hardly tell where he ends and I begin. No use in separating us now...I love him. Is that so hard to understand?” Blue replies, “You’re scared to live without him, plain and simple.” Who do you think is right, Marlo or Blue? Is it possible for them to both be right?
10. We know that Cobb couldn’t read Mac’s death report, but Twyla could clearly read, because she read the button that told her to send the girls to the Rabbit Hole. Why do you think she let everyone believe that Mac had been killed in a bar fight instead of telling her family, and the town, that he’d died honorably?
11. After learning some of her family’s secrets, Sarah Grace says, “I know I should just accept what’s happened, because there’s no changing it, but it seems impossible, and I’m mad about it. I can’t pretend otherwise. I refuse to pretend otherwise” (p. 293). Is Sarah Grace right that she should be able to accept the past because there’s no changing it? Is she right to not hide that she can’t?
12. Do you believe in miracles?

