

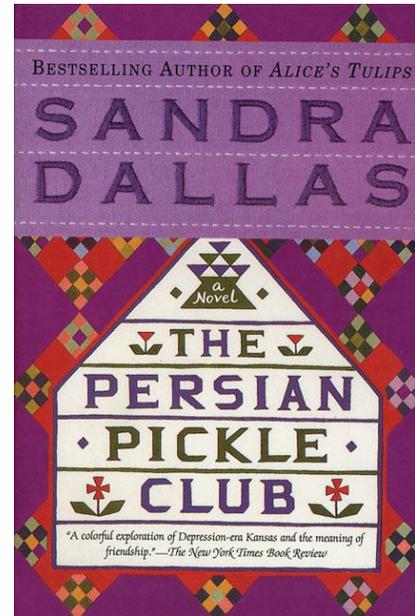
# READING GROUP GUIDE

## *The Persian Pickle Club*

By *Sandra Dallas*

ISBN 13: 978-0-312-14701-3

ISBN 10: 0-312-14701-5



### **About this Guide**

The following author biography and list of questions about *The Persian Pickle Club* 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 *The Persian Pickle Club*.

### **About the Book**

It is the 1930s, and hard times have hit Harveyville, Kansas, where the crops are burning up, and there's not a job to be found. For Queenie Bean, a young farm wife, a highlight of each week is the gathering of the Persian Pickle Club, a group of local ladies dedicated to improving their minds, exchanging gossip, and putting their quilting skills to good use. When a new member of the club stirs up a dark secret, the women must band together to support and protect one another. In her magical, memorable novel, Sandra Dallas explores the ties that unite women through good times and bad.

### **About the Author**

Award-winning author **Sandra Dallas** was dubbed “a quintessential American voice” by Jane Smiley, in *Vogue Magazine*. She is the author of *The Bride’s House*, *Whiter Than Snow*, *Prayers for Sale* and *Tallgrass*, among others. She is the recipient of the Women Writing the West Willa Award and the two-time winner of the Western Writers of America Spur Award. For 25 years, Dallas worked as a reporter covering the Rocky Mountain region for *Business Week*, and started writing fiction in 1990. She lives with her husband in Denver, Colorado.



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## Discussion Questions

1. The *Denver Post* called this "A book about how times can never be so hard that they can't be eased when people come together." How do the gatherings of the Persian Pickle Club ease its member's troubles?
2. Queenie says, "It was marrying that made women appreciate other women." Grover is a nice man who listens to Queenie's fears and shares his own. What do women characters provide each other?
3. Does Rita think she is a good friend to Queenie? Is she aware of the trouble her insensitive questions cause?
4. Tom bends down and tests the dryness of the dirt, realizing that there's no way of growing crops in it, but then turns up the road, apparently happy. How is this ability to ignore disaster echoed elsewhere in the book?
5. Quilting is central to this story. How is Harveyville like a quilt? What are the patterns? What is the stitching that holds it together?
6. Tyrone, the Reverend, and his sister are the only characters in the book who loudly profess devotion to God, yet they are the most disliked members of the community. How else does this book turn morality and religion on its head?
7. Rita is a different kind of woman from the other members of the club-she doesn't seem to want to empathize with anyone. Discuss how her goals and feelings differ from those of the members.
8. At the end, Rita sends a "Friendship Forever" quilt to Queenie and the club. What is Rita trying to tell the club?
9. Rita includes a card that says, "If you wonder who's responsible, I did it." Who really did do it? Does it matter?

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