

# *The Imposter Bride*

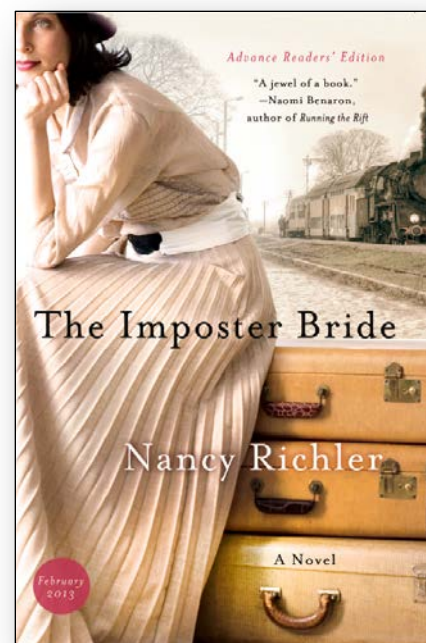
by Nancy Richler

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## About this Guide

The following author biography and list of questions about *The Imposter Bride* 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 Imposter Bride*.



## A Note from the Editor

All wonderful storytelling strikes a chord of recognition in the reader. After finishing the last pages of *The Imposter Bride*, I sat and wept, deeply moved—and then I wondered why, exactly, that was. As I write to you now, to introduce this haunting, powerful, and suspenseful novel, I am still wondering.

Is it the complicated relationship of mother and daughter at its core? Is it the suspenseful, tragic, but ultimately redeeming portrait of a woman struggling to overcome her WWII past? Is it the heartbreaking effect war has on this small community, bound but also divided by its devastating secrets? Is it the page-turning quality that alternates present and past, and makes you wonder where the truth really falls?

As the editor of *Sarah's Key*, I can say I've been hard-pressed to fall in love with another novel about a woman's role in WWII. But I have. *The Imposter Bride* is about family, memory and love — I hope you will feel as connected to it as I do.

Already a bestseller in the author's native Canada, praise for *The Imposter Bride* has been rolling in from reviewers and authors eager to endorse it; most recently, it was nominated for the prestigious Giller Prize, one of Canada's most distinguished literary awards.

If you are looking for a way to step out of your life for even just an afternoon, in pursuit of that escapism we all want from fiction, I am sure you will be carried away by this breathtaking novel. And you will want to talk about it. To dissect it. To share it with your friends. Just like me.

All best wishes,  
*Jennifer Weis*

## About the Book

*The Imposter Bride* blends gorgeous storytelling and generation-spanning intrigue in the story of Lily Azerov. A young, enigmatic woman, Lily arrives in post-WWII Montreal on her own, expecting to be married to Sol Kramer. But, upon seeing her at the train station, Sol turns her down. Out of pity, his brother Nathan decides to marry her instead, and pity turns into a deep—and doomed—love. But it is immediately clear that Lily is not who she claims to be. Her attempt to live out her life as Lily Azerov shatters when she disappears, leaving a new husband and a baby daughter with only a diary, a large uncut diamond—and a need to find the truth.

Who is Lily and what happened to the young woman whose identity she stole?

Why has she left and where did she go?

It's up to the daughter Lily abandoned to find the answers to these questions, as she searches for the mother she may never find or truly know.

## About the Author

NANCY RICHLER'S short fiction has been published in various American and Canadian literary journals, including *The Fiddlehead*, *Room of One's Own*, and *The New Quarterly*. Her previous novel, *Your Mouth is Lovely*, published in eleven countries, won the 2003 Canadian Jewish Book Award for fiction and Italy's 2004 Adei Wizo Award. Nancy is the cousin of the famed Canadian writer and literary critic Mordechai Richler. She lives in Montreal. For more information visit: [www.nancyrichler.com](http://www.nancyrichler.com)

## Praise for *The Imposter Bride*

"*The Imposter Bride* is a jewel of a book...these are characters that will stay with you long after you read the last word."

—Naomi Benaron, author of #1 Indie Next List Pick *Running the Rift*

"I absolutely loved *The Imposter Bride*. It's exquisitely written...and has an intricate plot that doesn't let go. It reminded me at times of Goolrick's *A Reliable Wife*."

—Alyson Richman, author of *The Lost Wife*

"*The Imposter Bride* is a powerful story...Richler's elegant prose resonates."

—Pam Jenoff, international bestselling author of *The Kommandant's Girl*

"Richler conceives a complex, multi-layered quest for identity that will compel readers to share Ruth's journey to find, understand, and love the mother who abandoned her."

—Nancy Jensen, author of #1 Indie Next List Pick *The Sisters*

“Richler dissects the mysteries of family bonds and betrayals with stunning emotional precision and magical insights into the human heart’s ability to heal.”

—Ellen Feldman, author of *Lucy and Next to Love*

“An intriguing tale...a satisfying resolution of one family's haunting secrets.”

—Shilpi Somaya Gowda, author of *Secret Daughter*

“Richler paints a deft and loving portrait of Jewish Montreal in the post-war years and then turns to wartime Europe for the dark mystery that provides her intriguing plot. The results are engrossing.”

—Kate Taylor, author of *A Man in Uniform*

“With delicacy and warmth, Richler weaves together the threads of a family: its closeness and secrets, opaqueness and hidden beauty, like the uncut gem whose mystery haunts these realistic characters.”

—Daphne Kalotay, author of *Russian Winter*

## Discussion Questions

1. What does the novel suggest about whether families are born or made?
2. Why do you think Lily chose to communicate with her daughter through rocks as opposed to words?
3. There are many secrets in *The Imposter Bride*, beginning with Lily's true identity. What secrets do other characters keep, and how do you think the secrets ultimately help or hurt their loved ones?
4. Lily attempts to sever her childhood and the difficult years in her homeland completely from her adult life. Is that ever really possible? Is it healthier to leave everything behind?
5. Why do you think Lily went to the home of the relative of the girl whose identity she had stolen?
6. *The Imposter Bride* shifts time periods and narratives several times, sometimes providing different perspectives of the same event. Are there any characters you wished had revealed more of their own perspective? In what ways does this structure reflect the experience of an individual within a family?

7. Why did some people have to take the identity papers of others at the end of WW2? Why did Lily feel she had to? Do you feel she had to?
8. What purposes were served for her by assuming the identity of another person?
9. Do you feel Lily bore any responsibility in the death of the girl whose identity she stole? Do the demands of morality/moral agency shift or change when a person is in danger or has been victimized?
10. Lily's behavior toward her daughter could be perceived as cold, distant, and uncaring. How do you see her attempts to communicate, and her treatment of Ruth later in life?
11. How do the main characters perceive loyalty? Does the abandonment of a parent affect Ruth's adult relationships?
12. Many of the characters in *The Imposter Bride* walk the line between selfishness and compassion. What does *The Imposter Bride* tell you about forgiveness? Do you agree with Ruth's forgiveness of the women in her life?
13. The conclusion of Ruth's relationship with her mother may be unexpected for some readers. Do you think it's realistic? After years of romanticizing her mother, does Ruth find what she was hoping for?
14. How were you affected when Ruth read the letter from her deceased grandmother? The letter from her own mother?
15. Did you find the conclusion satisfying?

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[ReadingGroupGold.com](http://ReadingGroupGold.com)

