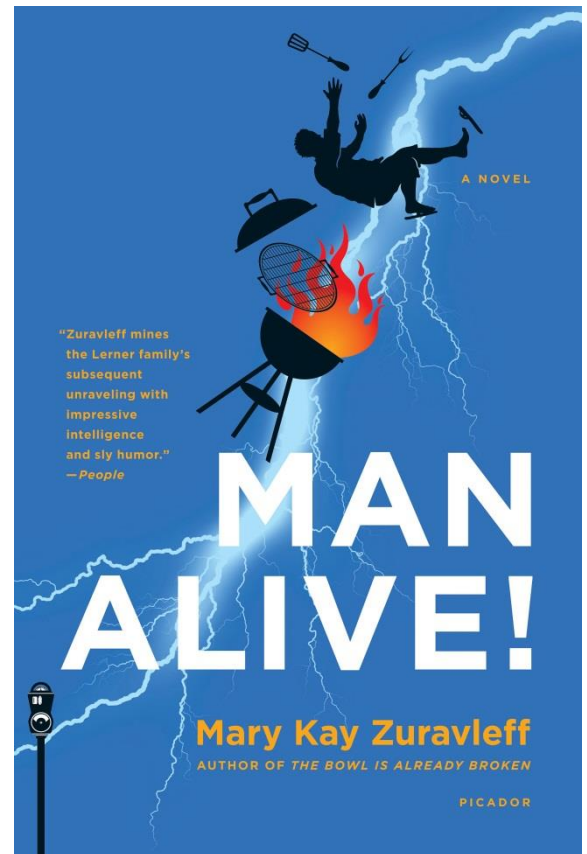


# Reading Group Gold

## Man Alive!

by Mary Kay Zuravleff

1. Throughout Owen's recovery, what positive and negative effects does his family experience? How would your family react to a situation like Owen's?
2. Discuss the way Mary Kay Zuravleff uses the theme of twins throughout the novel. How are Will and Ricky alike? What accounts for their personality differences? Which brother did you identify with the most?
3. What sort of caregiver does Toni aspire to be? What sort of caregiver does Owen need her to be? How did you react to their friends' reactions, from Pete and Marisol's absence to Charlotte and Ken's gift giving?
4. How does Owen's perception of his life change after the accident? What are his greatest concerns in the moments before he is struck by lightning? What are his sources of joy and comfort afterward?
5. Discuss Kyra and Will's relationship. What do they gain from each other, physically and emotionally? Do they remind you of your first experiences with dating?
6. In *Man Alive!* how is the human body presented? What marvelous capabilities does it have? What frailties does Owen encounter?
7. Was Owen well suited to his career as a pediatric psychiatrist? Do his injuries make him a more effective doctor?
8. Besides satisfying physical hunger, what forms of nourishment does Owen's barbecuing provide?
9. How does Brooke's experience as the youngest child, and the only daughter, differ from her brothers' sense of place and home within the Lerner family? How does she handle being one of her father's saviors? Is Natalio a good match for her?
10. When Will responds violently to the destruction of the LeJeune, his beloved bicycle, what other sources of rage does he confront? Is his reaction unhealthy? How would you have responded in his situation?



11. Discuss electricity as a symbol for the forces at work in this novel. In what ways is it destructive yet necessary for fueling life? What does Owen learn about his fear and pain through the electric art of spaz's tattoo parlor?
12. In the end, why does Ricky decide to team up with Kyra to help his brother? What does he gain from his chats with Dr. Clifton? What does she provide that Toni cannot, despite her career in academia?
13. Discuss the novel's title. In your mind, what does it mean to be truly alive in this world?
14. How does the depiction of family life in *Man Alive!* compare to the way relationships were portrayed in previous Zuravleff novels you have read? What is unique about her characters' search for meaning and fulfillment?

### **About the Author**

Mary Kay Zuravleff is also the author of *The Bowl Is Already Broken*, which *The New York Times* praised as "a tart, affectionate satire of the museum world's bickering and scheming," and *The Frequency of Souls*, which the *Chicago Tribune* deemed "a beguiling and wildly inventive first novel." Honors for her work include the American Academy's Rosenthal Award and the James Jones First Novel Award, and she has been nominated for the Orange Prize. She lives in Washington, D.C., where she serves on the board of the PEN/Faulkner Foundation and is a cofounder of the D.C. Women Writers Group.



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