

## **Hello, Book Clubbers.**

First, of all, as a first-time author, I am thrilled that you are considering *Girls in Trucks* for your book club. Thanks so much! Here are a couple of ways we've come up with to make your book club meeting even more fun.

### **Talk to Katie.**

If your book club has twelve readers or more and a member of your group has access to a speaker phone, you can arrange for me to call your group. To schedule, send me an e-mail at [Katie@katiecrouch.com](mailto:Katie@katiecrouch.com) with to your time zone, a contact name and a phone number to. Title the message " Book Club" and be sure to put the date your club meets in the title. You will receive an email confirmation, or, if I am unavailable, we can schedule an alternative time. I will do my best speak with you!

### **Get The Group Going With Discussion Questions.**

I've been in several book clubs, so I know the ball gets rolling pretty quickly amongst people who love to read. However, if you'd like some discussion questions to warm things up, Little Brown has come up with some great ones. I have included some on the next page, along with a list of my favorite books.

Thanks again for your interest. I'm sure *Girls in Trucks* will give you lots to talk about.

Best!

Katie Crouch

### *Girls in Trucks* Questions and Topics for Discussion

1. To be a member of the Camellia Society, one has to be born into it. How do the themes of “membership” and exclusivity play out in *Girls in Trucks*? What would you say the “dues” are for being a Camellia?
2. One of the implicit goals of the Camellia Society—as is particularly evident in the Cotillion dances—is to prepare its young ladies for marriage. Over the course of the novel, how does her Camellia upbringing prepare Sarah Walters for dating, courtship, and love?
3. Love is manifested in many different ways in the book, sometimes tragically. Which examples surprised you? Why do you think Sarah seems to have such bad luck with men?
4. Sarah’s older sister, Eloise, is the black sheep of the family. How does she differ from Sarah and how is she similar? How does Sarah see Eloise as a model—either to follow or not to follow?
5. Later on in the novel, Sarah is invited to a party at her friend Bitsy’s. She attends, even though she didn’t always get along with Bitsy, because Camellias are “friends for life.” What do you think of this die-hard loyalty? How do Sarah’s attitudes toward Bitsy and Charlotte change?
6. There is a distinction made by some of the Camellia matrons between what is decorous and “civilized” and what is “common.” When in the novel does this distinction begin to break down—or become subverted entirely?
7. One of the sayings from Sarah’s youth is “Once a Camellia, always a Camellia.” To what extent does this mantra hold true for Sarah?

8. Sarah heads North for college, in part to escape the Camellia Society. Does she succeed?
9. In many ways, this is a novel about home. When she's living in New York, how is Sarah pulled toward home and toward the past?
10. One of the curveballs that life throws at Sarah is that she has a baby by a man she hardly knows. How does having this child change her? Were you surprised by this turn of events?
11. Another surprise of the book is Sarah's mother's relationship with her lifelong friend, Georgia. How would you reconcile Sarah's mother's staunch Southern gentility with this unconventional romance?
12. Toward the end of the book we meet J.T., a classic Southern man from Sarah's youth, with the truck to prove it. How does J.T. differ from the other men in the novel, and why is Sarah drawn to him—is it just nostalgia or something deeper?
13. If you had to write an epilogue to the book, how would you imagine Sarah's life five years from now?

## Katie Crouch Recommended Reading

As a writer, one's work is never finished. There is always another book to write, and more importantly, always other books to read! The only way to learn to write well is to read books written by great authors. Some of the books that shaped my writing--like George Saunder's *Pastoralia*--seemingly have very little to do with my style or topic. Still, by studying his sentences and humor, I was able to learn to take chances and find my own voice.

Here are some books that influenced me while I was writing *Girls in Trucks*:

The Blindfold, by Siri Hustvedt  
Sam the Cat, by Matthew Klam  
Girl in a Flammable Skirt, by Aimee Bender  
Rich in Love, by Josephine Humphreys  
A Good Man is Hard to Find, by Flannery O'Connor  
Pastoralia, by George Saunders  
The Dead Fish Museum, by Charles D'Ambrosio  
The Corrections, by Jonathan Franzen  
Bastard Out of Carolina, by Dorothy Allison  
Naked, by David Sedaris  
Who Will Run the Frog Hospital?, by Lorrie Morre  
Slouching Toward Bethlehem, by Joan Didion  
Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius, by David Eggers  
Madame Bovary, by Gustave Flaubert  
Lust, by Susan Minot  
Brideshead Revisited, by Evelyn Waugh  
A Secret History, by Donna Tart  
Later the Same Day, by Grace Paley  
Cathedral, by Raymond Carver