

UNEXPECTED

“This book is a monument to the strength of resiliency and the beauties that result from welcoming the unexpected. Strongly advised for everyone looking for a motivational and moving book.

“Merkovic is a writer of great depth and authenticity.”



FOREWARD

I would love it if you would consider *Unexpected* for your next book club discussion group. I promise you that the novel will spark reflection and foster meaningful and lively conversations between the group. Some may even walk away with a different perspective on certain issues, be it fate, religion, trusting strangers, or the lengths they are willing to go to in the name of true friendship.

Book Club meetings are all about the company and perhaps the sharing of personal experiences. For a congenial evening, you may consider asking readers to bring a picture of themselves from high school, a photo of their best friend, and the home they grew up in.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. How did the prologue affect your reading of the book?
2. Which is your favorite character in the book, and why? Who did you relate to the most?
3. The author writes that her hometown, Casablanca, smells of jasmine and orange blossom. What is the smell of childhood for you?
4. Born in Rwanda, raised in Morocco, educated in Belgium, and now living in America, the author writes that each location affected her profoundly but differently. How have the places where you've lived affected you?
5. This novel explores the relationship between two childhood best friends who are polar opposites in character. In what ways are the friends different, and in what ways are they alike?
6. One of the themes in this book is female solidarity and strength. Finch and Georgy share a life-long, impregnable bond and are always there for each other in times of need. Do you have such a friend?
7. Discuss the pivotal role of female friendships in our lives. Do you think it becomes even more important as we get older?
8. Is true friendship as important as love? Some say love is work; do you consider friendship to be more or less demanding than a love relationship? If you had to choose one or the other, which would it be?

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9. What does this novel teach us about the bonds of friendship and the strength of love?
 10. What propels Finch to call Spain and book a flight to Malaga the next day is her dream of Georgie rattled, desperate, and calling for her. Have you ever had a premonition dream?
 11. The loss of her best friend sends Finch soul-searching. How do you feel about Finch's emotional journey? Can you relate to her and what she is going through? What allows her to move on?
 12. Ibrahim's teachings allow Finch to move on emotionally. Did any of his lessons resonate deep within you and spark reflection and/or inspiration? Which one?
 13. The author suggests that people come into our lives for a reason and that sometimes "strangers" are "chancers." Have you ever experienced a brief encounter with a stranger that changed your perspective on life?
 14. How did the epilogue affect your experience reading this book?
 15. At the beginning is a quote by Napoleon Hill: "It is strange but true that the most important turning points of life often come at the most unexpected times and in the most unexpected ways." What do you think is the relevance of that quote to the story as a whole?
 16. Other famous quotes are present throughout the book. What is the merit of quotes in our lives? Do you have a favorite one that you live by?
 17. Did the novel prompt you to reevaluate how you welcome the unexpected and experience life?