

Readers Group/Book Club Discussion Guide

GRAY IS THE NEW BLACK

by Dorothy Rice

- GRAY IS THE NEW BLACK has several concurrent threads (including teenage sexual assault, aging, marriage, food and weight obsessions and the actual writing of the book). Which theme was most prominent for you? With which did you relate most strongly? Did you feel the structure enhanced the narrative or was it confusing?
- This memoir shifts between the past (primarily the back story of the narrator's sexual assault and its aftermath), and the present. Was this an effective strategy in terms of character development and narrative arc?
- Did the memoir make you think about your own life and experiences, in relation to those related by the narrator?
- Did you find going gray to be a fitting metaphor for the narrator's journey?
- The narrator forms a strong, instant bond with her hairdresser. Discuss.
- What role do the narrator's two sisters play in her life? What universal sibling issues did you identify?
- The narrator struggles to communicate and connect with her husband. Is he portrayed sympathetically? What are your thoughts on the idea that men and women speak different languages?
- GRAY IS THE NEW BLACK is an intensely personal story. Did the author go too far, reveal too much?
- The book is primarily set in Northern California (the San Francisco Bay Area and Sacramento). What role does setting play in the memoir?
- The author was born in 1954 and came up in the 60s and 70s. Are the events in the memoir intrinsic to that era?
- The narrator reflects on the immense physical freedom children enjoyed in the 50s and 60s as compared to today's kids. Discuss.

- Family pets are significant characters in the memoir. Discuss.

- How would you describe the overall emotional tone of GRAY IS THE NEW BLACK? Did you find the ending resonant? Were you hoping for a “happier” ending?

- What other books, films or shows did GRAY IS THE NEW BLACK remind you of

GRAY IS THE NEW BLACK: A Memoir of Self-Acceptance
Author - Dorothy Rice, from Otis Books, June 2019
ISBN: 9980243023 - 312 Pages

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