



NANCY: In this book, Author Diane Chiddister takes us on a journey inside the thoughts of Thomas, an anthropologist dying of cancer, and Lillian, a housewife navigating dementia. It is a gently written exploration of aging lives with beautiful words and deep thoughts, including intriguing stories of their caregivers and the dilemmas facing modern nursing homes.



KATHARINE: Well, as a retired college professor, I could identify with Thomas. I enjoyed the way he continued to practice his anthropology, observing the nursing home residents. Quite humorous at times, and like him, I sometimes long to be speaking to the students again. I recommend this book for students preparing to become nurses, doctors and social workers.



MOLLY: Well, I know for-profit health care does a number on the people. I think the author did a good job showing this problem we've got today with nursing homes. Reducing staff? Using a straight jacket for someone with dementia? I know it's getting really hard for health care workers these days. They are stretched to the limit, and money drives so much of what happens.



JANE: I don't think it's a bad thing for nursing homes to make money. Why else would someone go to all that trouble to build a place for old people? Capitalism drives our economy. In this story, Beth screwed up. I think the new owners will take care of the patients better.



PRISCILLA: Oh my goodness, poor Lillian. Sometimes I forget things, too. I certainly hope I don't end up like her, though. I think the author did a good job of what it must feel like to be losing your mind. I felt so sorry for her! And it is hard to take care of someone like that, too!



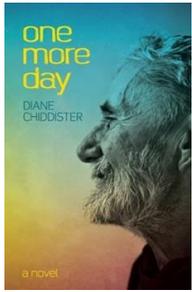
ABIGAIL: I really enjoyed Thomas. I thought the author did a good job building his character, portraying his anthropological musings and his coping with dying, his illness and his guilt. I honestly liked the old man. I also liked Sally a lot. What a nice woman! I'd like to have her taking care of me and/or my loved ones.



SALLIE: I thought Thomas' relationship with his daughter was well-written. You see how a divorce can impact a child's life and cause bitterness. Such a sad story that they weren't able to resolve, which often happens in families. I'm with Abigail on Sally, and not just because she shares my name! I loved her thoughtfulness and how she found unexpected love in the story.



Discussion Guide



About the Book

Title: One More Day

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Questions for Discussion

1. What were your general impressions of this book?
2. In this book, we view the journey of aging from several perspectives—Lillian, a woman with dementia, Thomas, an anthropologist dying of cancer and several caregivers, particularly Sally—a nursing home aide, Beth—a nursing home administrator and to some extent, Lexie, Thomas' daughter. Did you identify with any of these characters? Explain.
3. We see the experience of dementia in this book through the eyes of Lillian and also how Beth and a for-profit administrator would deal with her. What experience have you had with people with dementia? How did you respond and offer care for them?
4. Thomas looks at the nursing home residents as an anthropologist. What did you find intriguing about his observations?
5. This book views the experience of dying through Thomas' eyes. What were some of the highlights of his process? What were his issues to resolve?
6. The book provides an inside look at a nursing home, run as a not-for-profit and then as a for-profit. What were the differences in approach? How does this affect the workers and residents?
7. What have been your experiences with end of life issues for members of your family who have passed on? How did they compare/contrast with this story?
8. As you consider your own end of life time, what type of care would you prefer? Have you discussed this with those who might be making decisions with you?
9. How do you think we as a society should care for our elders as they transition out of this world?
10. Read over the MAMs comments on this book. With whom do you agree/disagree and why?
11. Will this book change your life or perspective in any way? Explain.