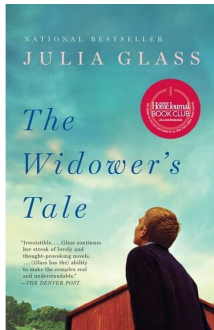




Discussion Guide



About the Book: The Widower's Tale

Author: Julia Glass

Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2011

Websites:

penguinrandomhouse.com/authors/10192/julia-glass/

Questions for Discussion

1. What were your general impressions of this book?
2. What was the Widower Percy's journey in this book? How did he get stuck? What drew him out? What was the transformation for him in this story?
3. What role did the Percy's house play in this story?
4. What has been your experience with old houses? Have you ever restored an old house? What do you think of historic preservation vs. tearing them down and building new?
5. Two immigrants figure prominently in this book. What did you think of Celestino? How did his character demonstrate the challenges of being an immigrant in America today?
6. Turo was the other immigrant, fighting the establishment. What did you think of his pranks and why do you think the author chose to let him go free?
7. How did Percy's relationship with Sarah impact his life?
8. What was Robert's life about? How did Turo draw him in?
9. In what ways did Percy find purpose in his life as he helped Robert and Celestino?
10. Percy didn't like letting go of the old ways, in terms of his house and the library. How do you find yourself hanging on to the ways things used to be? What is good and bad about this for Percy, for you? How did Percy find new life when he let go? How might you?
11. What will stay with you from this story?
12. What do the MAMs have to say about the book? Whom do you agree with?

Listen on YouTube:

We interview Julia Glass, author of "Three Junes" and many other books! (29:07)

National Writers Series: Julia Glass (1:20)

Julia Glass: 2010 National Book Festival (28:41)

Inspired: Julia Glass (4:36)



NANCY: Storyteller Julia Glass weaves grief and change into a redemptive saga leading to new life after the death of a spouse. An old man is ushered out of his house, as a preschool comes to life in his barn, a tree house created in his favorite tree and a young mother wakes his heart. Immigrants, historic preservation, illness, creativity and finding purpose are some themes in her masterpiece.



ABIGAIL: I love this story. I, too, lost the love of my life, but Percy lost his wife so much younger. Like him, I was lost at first and not interested in dating until I met Seamus. Sarah was his Seamus. Robert and Celestino were his projects, just like our group homes are mine.



SALLIE: So hard to lose your mother at a young age. In the story, it seems to affect Trudy, the older daughter, and Clover, the younger one differently. Trudy buries herself in her studies, becoming a doctor and serving, while Clover spends many years trying to find her place. I think both of these approaches are quite common.



PRISCILLA: I loved the way she described the old houses. I would have loved to go on that tour of homes and see them all fixed up. I think it's sad that people tear down these masterpieces and then build cheaper houses in their place. I was impressed when we traveled in Europe how more of the old houses are preserved.



JANE: Well, I really liked Sarah in this book. She stuck to her guns as an artist entrepreneur. She married her daughter's father when she needed his health insurance, and she chose to handle her cancer bravely, often closing Percy out. Let's hear it for strong women!



MOLLY: I thought the immigrant stories were interesting. Celestino was clearly quite intelligent, but his education was cut short by the death of his benefactor. Then he found ways to excel in the landscaping world, finally beginning to come into his own under the tutelage of Percy. Turo, on the other hand, fought the system. You could understand him, but was it effective?



KATHARINE: I think this book fits best in the college literature class. It's a wonderful story with many themes and well-developed characters. An English professor could guide the class in a variety of analyses of this work. Perhaps also it might be helpful for those studying psychology or counseling, as it explores the effect of grief and how people heal, sometimes over long periods. I enjoyed Percy in this story and his redemption.