

READING GROUP GUIDE

The Sunday List of Dreams

A Novel

Kris Radish

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ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Kris Radish has captivated readers coast-to-coast with novels featuring ordinary women who dare to make their most extraordinary dreams come true. In **The Sunday List of Dreams**, she takes us on an enticing adventure with Connie Nixon, a fiftysomething firecracker who discovers it's never too late to start living passionately.

For as long as Connie can remember, she has made time each Sunday to rewrite a list of her goals and wishes. She could never have predicted the sparks that would fly when she finally decided to tackle one of the less glamorous items on the list—getting rid of the junk piled up in her garage. After all the years she spent raising three daughters and struggling with a painful marriage, the boxes represent a history she can barely stand to face. But buried in this rubble is a revelation that will reunite Connie with Jessica, her estranged daughter who moved to New York City. It turns out that Jessica is a highly successful businesswoman—in the sex-toy industry. When Connie visits her daughter's secret world unannounced, both women begin to confront a myriad of truths about themselves and their memories of the past. The result is an exhilarating adventure, by turns hilarious and inspiring, that helps Connie create a whole new list of dreams—while finally giving herself permission to make them all come true.

The questions, discussion topics, and author biography that follow are intended to enhance your reading of **The Sunday List of Dreams**. We hope they will enrich your experience of this vibrant novel.

QUESTIONS AND SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How does Connie's list of dreams change throughout the novel? What does her list say about her sense of self?
2. Chapter four describes Connie's sustaining friendship with Frannie O'Brien, who is described as both co-pilot and navigator. How does Frannie help move Connie, and the novel, forward? Who is the O'Brien in your life?
3. How does Connie feel about her house (even when it's talking to her) and the artifacts from her children and husband? What new concept of home does she dream of?
4. Why did Jessica relate to her mother differently than Sabrina and Macy did? What puts the distance or closeness in their relationships? Put yourself in Connie's or Jessica's shoes upon the discovery of "Diva's." What would you do?

5. Why had Connie disapproved of her other daughters? What did it take to bring reconciliation among all four Nixon women?
6. Jessica has to travel to Louisiana because of production issues. Talk about what sexuality means in your community: Are there differences in the way men and women perceive this?
7. How does Connie reconcile the idea of Jessica as her baby, and the reality that Jessica is a grown woman? How do mothers and daughters shift in the way they relate to each other throughout life? How does it happen in the novel?
8. How do the novel's three primary settings—Cypress, Indiana; New York City; and New Orleans—compare to each other? How does each one capture a different side of Connie's personality, especially considering that two of the cities have recently survived tragedy?
9. On the plane bound for New York, Connie bonds with Mattie the hairdresser in a process Kris Radish calls "female communion." When has female communion brought miracles into your life? How does this shape the novel?
10. What role did Romney, Kinsey, and Meredith play in fostering Jessica's career? What did Romney show Jessica about being a good lover? At what point did Jessica's career overtake her ability to find pleasure in life?
11. What do Connie and Jessica learn about themselves, and about each other, from Saffine in Louisiana? What makes her so good at stirring honesty in them?
12. What is the significance of Connie's life as a nurse? What does it say about her capabilities? Did it prepare her at all for a life in retail? How did she go about deciding where to dedicate her life after retirement?
13. Michael taps a well of passion in Connie, and Martin does the same for Jessica. What enabled both women to let go of their fears? What were the origins of these fears? What is the antidote to Connie's panic attack in chapter twenty-three?
14. Chapter fourteen ends with Connie's advice to her patients that "the center is a very fine place to be, because from there you can see both sides and select the best way home." Respond to this.
15. In an interview, Kris Radish has said that her stories are a way for her to "honor the relationships women have with each other, their friendships, and the great love that women share with each other." Do you think she has achieved this goal with **The Sunday List of Dreams**?
16. What threads link **The Sunday List of Dreams** to Kris Radish's previous novels? What would Radish's previous heroines think of Diva's?