



Discover. Read. Share.

The Fixed Stars DISCUSSION GUIDE

- Talk about Molly's interaction with Nora, and the chain of events it sets off. Have you had any chance meetings in your own life that ended up shaping your future in a major way?
- This memoir explores the idea of identity not being the stable entity we often assume it is, but being ultimately changeable and adaptable. What do you think? Are there parts of your personality that feel like they define the core of who you are? Could you imagine those things changing?
- Sometimes, when we think about coming out and coming of age, we think of younger people—perhaps teenagers. Discuss Molly's experience going through this change in her mid-thirties. How do you think her experience differed?
- The author talks about the idea of "coming to terms with promises you can't keep." Discuss these types of promises throughout the book and how they affected the people involved. How does one navigate this type of radical honesty?
- It takes a certain bravery to deviate from life as you know it. Discuss Molly's process for both distancing herself from her original life and maintaining some semblance of it for June.
- The restaurant community in this book feels very tight knit, and Molly and Brandon's role in it seems rather public with the success of Delancey and other ventures. Consider the role that public-facing career played in this chapter of the couple's life and how it may have helped or hindered any member of the family.
- Society seems to expect people who are LGBTQ+ to join the queer community, though if one is straight, that sexual identity is accepted as a kind of "default"—no particular expectations are obvious. Discuss this parallel.
- At several points in the memoir, Molly discusses her previous "born this way" understanding of sexuality and the conflict between her new insights and the reality that many hard-won legal gains for the LGBTQ+ community rest on this argument. What was your reaction to this? Does this memoir complicate or alter your understanding of sexuality in any way?
- Discuss the idea of forgiveness, especially in regard to oneself. How does this play out in Molly's story?
- Talk about the genre of memoir writing—how do you think one gets the courage to tell such personal stories? What other memoirs have you read that you'd consider standouts?
- *The Fixed Stars* cites the research of psychologist Lisa M. Diamond on the idea that sexuality—specifically for women—is rather fluid, with the only constant being that it changes. Do you believe this to be true?
- How do children change you? How do they change your marriage and/or the evolution of your relationships?
- When June comes of age, if and when she reads this memoir, what do you think she will feel?
- What do you think of the title of this book and its overall metaphor of astronomy? Do you relate events or people in your own life to constellations or other natural phenomena? Who are your own "fixed stars," and what makes them so?
- The author mentions lots of other books, articles, and research in this book, from Zadie Smith to Daniel Dennett to Walt Whitman. Did anything particularly resonate with you? Were you already familiar with any of these pieces, and if so, is there anything you can share about your own learnings or observations?
- Could you imagine writing your own memoir? What would the story contain?

Eager to keep *The Fixed Stars* discussion going? Check out our exclusive Author Q&A, where Molly Wizenberg offers up some questions of her own! This—plus a Meeting Planner and Recommended Next Reads—can be found at theclub.hoopladigital.com.

