

Life is the best medicine ...

twenty

a novel

“One of the most remarkable books I’ve ever read.”

—Pamela Wallace, Academy Award–winning screenwriter

Debra Landwehr Engle

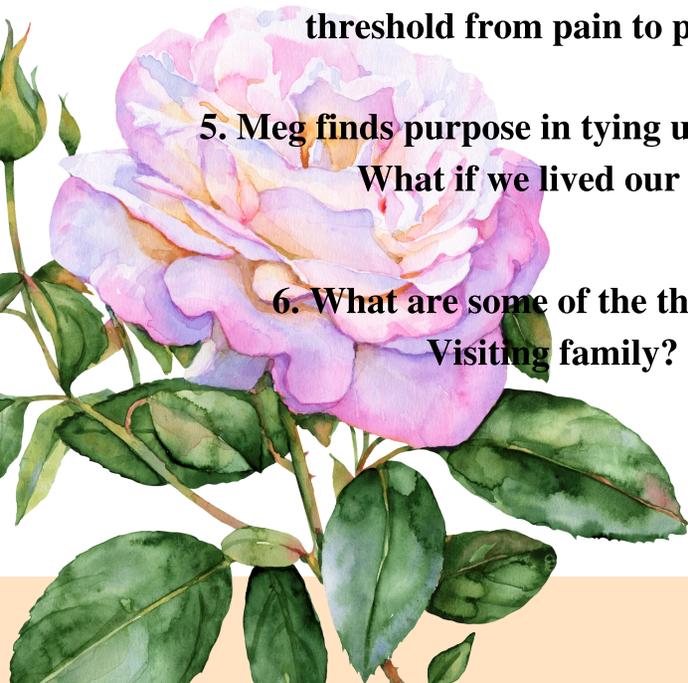


BOOK CLUB KIT

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Discussion Guide

- 1. At the beginning of the story, Meg feels overwhelmed by loss, grief, and a lack of purpose as she looks at the years ahead. She appears only partially committed to ending her life, yet she takes the pearls anyway. Why do you think she makes this decision when she's not sure what she wants or what the outcome will be?**
- 2. Meg says that her action isn't a regular suicide. Do you agree or disagree? What makes it different? Does the twenty-day window change the definition of her decision?**
- 3. In the story, the weather plays an important role, as the drought mirrors how parched Meg feels inside. It also makes her feel more helpless and despondent. How much are you influenced by your environment? What do you do to feel better when you're dealing with extreme conditions in your external life?**
- 4. While the green pearls are fictional, many people believe that terminally ill patients should have the right to assisted suicide. When Dr. Edelman gives Meg the pearls, he says, "Sometimes helping people cross that threshold from pain to peace is the greatest gift you can give them." Do you agree or disagree?**
- 5. Meg finds purpose in tying up loose ends, even though she doesn't know if she's preparing for life or death. What if we lived our lives as though we didn't have much time left? Is there value in this?**
- 6. What are some of the things Meg does that you would also do in her situation? For instance, cleaning? Visiting family? Giving things away? Reconnecting? What would you do differently?**



Discussion Guide

7. Meg's housecleaning mirrors the ways she's clearing out her inner life. If you were to get rid of one thing that takes up space in your heart and mind, what would it be? For instance, guilt? Shame? Worry? Judgment? Doubt?

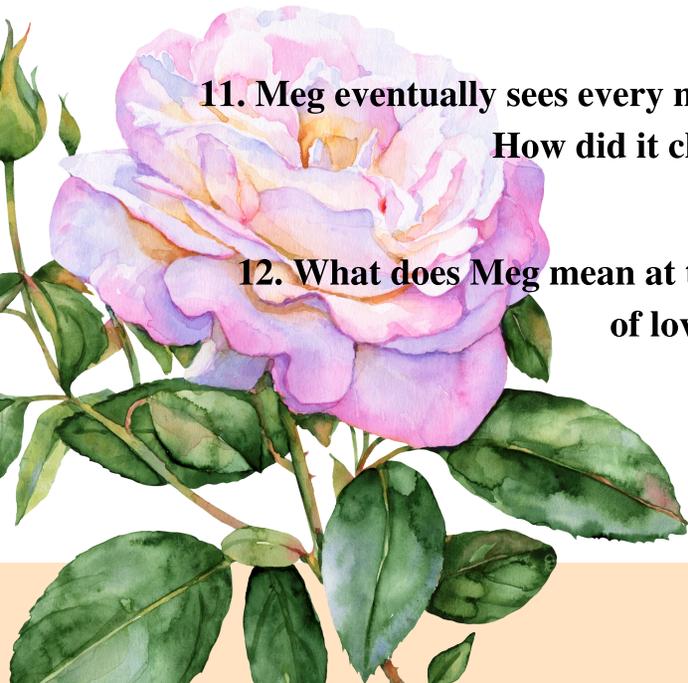
8. What events in the story give Meg hope? What role does hope play in our lives?

9. As Joe comes back into Meg's life, she learns many lessons about love and the cost of keeping it at arm's length. Why do we sometimes cut ourselves off from love? Which of Meg's lessons resonate most with you?

10. Why is forgiveness so essential for Meg to finally heal from her past? What role has forgiveness played in your life?

11. Meg eventually sees every moment of life as a gift. Have you had such a moment? If so, what was it like? How did it change your perspective on the challenges life often brings?

12. What does Meg mean at the end when she says, "Either way I'll be in heaven, looking straight into the eyes of love"? What do you think happens to Meg in the end? Why?



Beyond The Page

***Twenty* is the kind of book that becomes even more meaningful when you share and discuss it with people you care about. Whether you're part of a book club or like to talk about your favorite books with friends, you can use the following ideas to make your *Twenty*-themed gathering extra special.**



The *Twenty* Playlist

In Twenty, Meg remembers hearing her mom play the song “I’ll Never Find Another You” after her father died. The song, recorded by The Seekers in the 1960s, is the kind of folk ballad that Lillian would have liked. And the lyrics combine a sense of grief, longing and hope that seem perfect for both Lillian and Meg.

Here's a list of additional songs that Meg & Lillian would enjoy:

I Will Remember You, Sarah McLaughlin

How Do I Live?, LeAnn Rimes

Somewhere Over the Rainbow, Eva Cassidy

How Can I Help You Say Goodbye, Patty Loveless

I Will Always Love You, Whitney Houston

If You Get There Before I Do, Collin Raye

Missing You, Diana Ross

Love Can Build A Bridge, Wynonna Judd

Tears in Heaven, Eric Clapton

To Love Somebody, The Bee Gees

Fields of Gold, Eva Cassidy

I'm Alive, Celine Dion

If Tomorrow Never Comes, Garth Brooks

One Moment in Time, Dana Winner



Set The Scene

Below are a few ways you can create a Twenty-themed environment for your book talk.

Put out flowers: Since the women in Meg's family were named after flowers, you could gather Marguerite daisies for Meg and lilies for Lillian. Or make a bouquet from sprigs of holly for Meg's sister, or black-eyed Susans (aka rudbeckia) in honor of Meg's niece. For a bright splash of color, arrange a bouquet of flowers in the same beautiful hues as the cover of the book.

Snacks to serve: To serve something special at your gathering, you'll find a recipe for Lillian's Coconut Cake at the back of *Twenty*. Enjoy it with coffee labeled "A Cup o' Joe" in honor of Meg's ex-husband Joe. Or make cupcakes with gummy worms in them, reminiscent of the scene in which Meg's daughter Rose brings worms into the kitchen when Meg is baking cupcakes. A worm falls off of Rose's finger and...splat—right into one of the cupcakes!

Giveaways: Use your imagination to come up with small souvenirs of your *Twenty* discussion, such as packets of flower seeds and small watering cans, or paints and paper to make colorful swirls like the ones Meg painted on her kitchen wall.



ABOUT DEBRA LANDWEHR ENGLE

Debra Landwehr Engle is the bestselling author of *The Only Little Prayer You Need*, *Let Your Spirit Guides Speak* and *Be The Light That You Are*. She is the co-founder of a women's program of personal and spiritual growth, teaches classes in A Course in Miracles, and offers courses and workshops worldwide.

Debra lives with her husband, Bob, in Madison County, Iowa, home of the famed covered bridges. *Twenty* is her first novel.

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