



AFTER ANNE

A Novel of Lucy Maud Montgomery's Life

By Logan Steiner

Reading Group Guide

Use these questions to guide your book club's discussion of *After Anne* by Logan Steiner

Question 1: In what ways is Maud similar to Anne? In what ways is she different? In what ways is Frede similar to Anne? In what ways is she different? How did the novel impact your understanding of how writers create characters?

Question 2: How did your understanding of the italicized burning scenes change as you read? How did you interpret Maud's relationship with fire throughout the novel?

Question 3: Maud's grandmother tells her, "There's no fairness in this life, child, not in this life. Life brings us what it brings and success lies in how many times we can become someone new." (p. 80) Do you agree with Maud's grandmother? How does Maud's story confirm or contradict her grandmother's words?

Question 4: How did you come to understand Maud's marriage with Ewan? How much of their relationship was the product of a particular time and place? How much of their relationship dynamic would be the same today?

Question 5: Knowing what Maud's future held, how do you feel about the decision Maud made at the end of the birthday weekend?

Question 6: How can we understand more about the modern-day opioid epidemic through reading about the prescription and use of bromides and barbiturates in Maud's day and seeing their effect on Maud and Ewan?

Question 7: How did you understand Maud's relationship with Edwin? How might their relationship have been different today?

Question 8: Maud writes to Edwin late in life, “What I mean is there are times I can almost bring myself to step back and see the comedy of it all. . . . See how all I can really control is me and what I choose to look at. I learned this, once, but not fully enough. Sometimes another way of being in this world seems out there just beyond the tips of my fingers.” (p. 318) How does the bind that Maud faces here inform the course of her life? How do you relate to this bind?

Question 9: Maud struggles with what parts of herself to make public and to keep private throughout the novel, including in the process of editing her journals. How do you encounter this same struggle? How do you decide what to share and with whom?

Question 10: It often seems like Maud’s mood (and luck) worsens the farther she gets physically from the Island. Yet the Island grows in stature the more Maud writes about it. How did you understand Maud’s relationship with the Island? What role does a sense of place play in your life?

Question 11: Maud’s life experience was shaped, as so many of ours are, by a series of personal tragedies. In what ways, if any, has your life been shaped by your hardest experiences?

Question 12: Maud’s epitaph on her gravestone reads simply: “Wife of Ewan Macdonald.” How does that epitaph either fulfill or betray Maud’s own vision for her life and legacy?

Question 13: Maud wrote in *Anne of the Island*, “Those who can soar to the highest heights can also plunge to the deepest depths, and . . . the natures which enjoy most keenly are those which also suffer most sharply.” Have you found this sentiment to be true of you or of others in your life? Do you believe it was true of Maud?

Question 14: How did learning more about Maud’s life impact your experience of her fiction? And for those unfamiliar with Maud’s work, did the novel draw you to read her fiction or her journals?