

PUTNAM

Reader's
Group Guide

BEWARE

THE

WOMAN

A NOVEL

MEGAN

ABBOTT

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF *THE TURNOUT*

1. ... Author Megan Abbott prefaces Beware the Woman with a quote from Erica Jong. Discuss this quote as it relates to the title. How did this prime your reading of the text?
2. ... From the beginning, we witness a certain ferocity to Jed and Jacy's relationship. Discuss the impact of starting the story where it begins—with Jed and Jacy on their way to Dr. Ash. How would your reading of the novel differ if it had started at the onset of Jed and Jacy's relationship?
3. ... Jed says he had never been in love before Jacy; he'd only been sick with love. How do you distinguish these two experiences? In what ways do fear and love interact in this novel?
4. ... In the early chapters, Jacy says, "I felt silly. I was silly. The hormones, yes. The hormones are killing, killing. It's just the hormones, I swear." How does this quote speak to common perceptions around the female body? Discuss what this reveals about Jacy's state of mind, and to what extent it foreshadows the story's later events.
5. ... Early on, Jacy's mother tells her, "We all marry strangers." To what extent do you think this is true, or does it suggest more about Jacy's mother?
6. ... The idea of consciousness is explored throughout Beware the Woman. In the context of this story, what does it mean and take to be "awake," for each of the characters?
7. ... Each woman's "onstage" illustration places them in a more vulnerable light than the men. To what extent are all the women's paths parallel?

- 8.)... Beware the Woman takes place in the remote Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Describe the elements of the location, and how it lends itself to the themes of the story. Discuss how ideas of home interact with place, especially in relation to where Jed feels most comfortable.
- 9.)... The mountain lion makes its presence known a few times in the story. Discuss why you think Abbott chose the moments she did to reveal these creatures, and what they might symbolize. How does each character react to the lion, and what does this reveal about them?
- 10.)... Caretaking is a big theme in the novel. How do the women in this story protect their own, and each other? How does this contrast with how the men nurture others in this story?
- 11.)... Describe Dr. Ash's characterization, how Jacy sees him at first, then later as the story progresses. How does he view his place in the world? What do you think he ultimately wishes for his son?
- 12.)... Beware the Woman speaks to how violence and tragedy can infiltrate both the human body and psyche. In which scenes did you most viscerally discern the connection between body and mind, and for which characters? Why?
- 13.)... A shocking act of violence is revealed toward the end of Beware the Woman. How did you react to the incident? Describe the emotions it spurred.
- 14.)... What do you think will happen with Jacy and Jed?