

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY



Taylor Jenkins Reid is the author of the *New York Times* Bestselling novels *Malibu Rising*, *Daisy Jones and the Six* and *The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo*, as well as *One True Loves*, *Maybe in Another Life*, *After I Do*, and *Forever, Interrupted*. Her books have been chosen by Reese's Book Club, Read with Jenna, Indie Next, Best of Amazon, and Book of the Month. Her novel, *Daisy Jones and the Six*, is currently being adapted by Hello Sunshine into a limited series for Amazon. She lives in Los Angeles.

- Author's website

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Each husband's section opens with an illustrative moniker (for example, "Poor Ernie Diaz," "Goddamn Don Adler," "Agreeable Robert Jamison"). Discuss the meaning and significance of some of these descriptions. How do they set the tone for the section that follows? Did you read these characterizations as coming from Evelyn, Monique, an omniscient narrator, or someone else?
2. Of the seven husbands, who was your favorite, and why? Who surprised you the most?
3. Monique notes that hearing Evelyn Hugo's life story has inspired her to carry herself differently than she would have before. In what ways does Monique grow over the course of the novel? Discuss whether Evelyn also changes by the end of her time with Monique, and if so, what spurs this evolution.
4. On page 147, Monique says, "I have to 'Evelyn Hugo' Evelyn Hugo." What does it mean to "Evelyn Hugo"? Can you think of a time when you might be tempted to "Evelyn Hugo"?
5. Did you trust Evelyn to be a reliable narrator as you were reading? Why, or why not? Did your opinion on this change at all by the conclusion, and if so, why?

6. What role do the news, tabloid, and blog articles interspersed throughout the book serve in the narrative? What, if anything, do we learn about Evelyn's relationship to the outside world from them?
7. At several points in the novel, such as pages 82–83 and 175–82, Evelyn tells her story through the second person, "you." How does this kind of narration affect the reading experience? Why do you think she chooses these memories to recount in this way?
8. How do you think Evelyn's understanding and awareness of sexuality were shaped by her relationship with Billy—the boy who works at the five-and-dime store? How does her sensibility evolve from this initial encounter? As she grows older, to what extent is Evelyn's attitude toward sex influenced by those around her?
9. On page 54, Evelyn uses the saying "all's well that ends well" as part of her explanation for not regretting her actions. Do you think Evelyn truly believes this? Using examples from later in her life, discuss why or why not. How do you think this idea relates to the similar but more negatively associated phrase "the ends justify the means"?
10. Evelyn offers some firm words of wisdom throughout her recounting of her life, such as "Be wary of men with something to prove" (p. 77), "Never let anyone make you feel ordinary" (p. 208), and "It is OK to grovel for something you really want" (p.192). What is your favorite piece of advice from Evelyn? Were there any assertions you strongly disagreed with?
11. Several times, Evelyn mentions having cosmetic surgery. What was your reaction to this? How do these decisions jibe with the value system and ethical code that she seems to live by? Why do you think Evelyn continues to dye her hair at the end of her life?
12. Review the scenes on pages 199 and 348, in which Evelyn relays memories of conversing in Spanish after years without speaking it. Discuss the role language plays in her understanding of who she is. In what ways does her relationship to her Cuban identity parallel her experiences with her sexuality, and in what ways does it differ?
13. If you could meet and interview one celebrity at the end of their life, who would it be? What would you ask them?

- http://www.simonandschuster.net/books/The-Seven-Husbands-of-Evelyn-Hugo/Taylor-Jenkins-Reid/9781501161933/reading_group_guide

BOOK REVIEWS

Booklist

Reid (*One True Loves*, 2016) knows how to tug at heart strings with unusual tales of finding real and lasting love. Here she goes in a different direction, evoking emotion in all new ways. Former Hollywood A-lister Evelyn Hugo is finally going public with the story of her seven husbands, ready to reveal the love of her life, so she calls in journalist Monique Grant to write her coveted biography. Stunned and thrilled to be given such a big project, Monique begins

recording Evelyn's secrets, but she soon wonders if Evelyn's past comes closer to her own than she'd realized, and the reveal of Evelyn's great love may not be Evelyn's only surprise. Much of the novel is in Evelyn's voice, narrating her story to Monique with inflection and dialogue in a way that doesn't feel quite realistic. Yet this is a minor flaw when the reader is so captivated by old Hollywood glamour, intriguing and complex characters, and Reid's unsurpassed ability to leave her audience reaching for a hankie. An utterly unique take on what truly makes a family. Copyright 2018 Booklist Reviews.

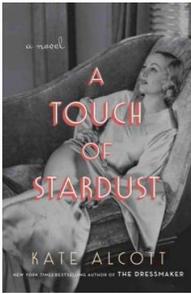
Library Journal

Adored movie icon Evelyn Hugo is finally ready to tell her story, and does she have a story to tell. Born to Cuban immigrants in New York's Hell's Kitchen neighborhood, Evelyn remade herself into a classic Hollywood beauty, marrying seven men along the way. First there was Eddie, the man who brought her to Los Angeles; then there was Don, an abuser; then Mick; and then Rex—but everyone knows that the true love of her life was Harry Cameron, who had been with her through thick and thin. But as Monique, her biographer, uncovers more of her past, she finds that the heart of Evelyn's love life doesn't involve men at all. Willing to use her looks and her body to advance her career, Evelyn may know that some of her actions were wrong, but she doesn't feel any guilt for her past. VERDICT Jenkins (*One True Loves*) has crafted another tale sure to appeal to fans of women's fiction, Susan Meissner, and Beatriz Williams.—Jennifer Mills, Shorewood-Troy Lib., IL
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Kirkus Reviews

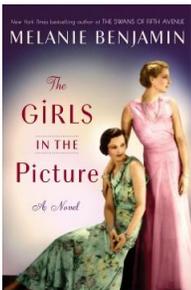
An aging starlet with seven marriages behind her generously offers the rights to her memoir to an inexperienced writer—at a heartbreaking cost. Monique Grant is stunned when Hollywood legend Evelyn Hugo grants an exclusive interview to her over more seasoned journalists, but when she's also chosen to publish Evelyn's final confessions after her death, she learns that the 79-year-old actress has enough life experience for them both. Growing up poor in Hell's Kitchen, young Evelyn Herrera trades her virginity for a ride to Hollywood, changes her name, and climbs the rungs of the entertainment-industry ladder one husband at a time until she hits Oscar gold. To write her off as being calculating and fickle would leave out the difficulty of being a woman, especially a woman of color, trying to get by in the late 1950s without a man's blessing. Evelyn plays up her bombshell figure and hides her Cuban roots by dyeing her hair blonde—the first of many lies she'll have to tell over the course of her life to prove to the world that she deserves her place in the spotlight. She's unapologetically ambitious but not without remorse. Which of her seven husbands was her true love? Why did she choose Monique to tell her story? Evelyn recounts her failures and triumphs in chronological order, one husband at a time, with a few breaks for Monique to report back to her editor. The celebrity tell-all style is a departure from Reid's (*One True Loves*, 2016, etc.) previous books, but Evelyn Hugo is a character who can demand top billing. When asked if it bothers her that "all anyone talks about when they talk about you are the seven husbands of Evelyn Hugo," she says no: "Because they are just husbands. I am Evelyn Hugo." Reid's heroine reveals her darkest secrets as if she were wiping off makeup at the end of the night—a celebration of human frailty that speaks to the Marilyn Monroe and Elizabeth Taylor in us all. Copyright Kirkus 2017 Kirkus/BPI Communications. All rights reserved.

READALIKES



***A Touch of Stardust* by Kate Alcott**

Taking a job at the studio where David O. Selznick is filming *Gone with the Wind*, Julie Crawford becomes an assistant to Carole Lombard, a rising actress from Julie's hometown who embarks on a scandalous affair with Clark Gable.



***The Girls in the Picture* by Melanie Benjamin**

An intimate reimagining of the powerful creative partnership between Hollywood superstars Frances Marion and Mary Pickford traces their friendship and boundary-breaking achievements against a backdrop of pre-World War I Hollywood.



***By Any Name* by Cynthia Voigt**

While serving in the USO during WWII, Mumma meets Pops. She's got an engagement ring on each finger from her many suitors, but it's Pops who wins her heart for good. Over the next fifty years, she raises four daughters who see their Mumma as contentious, pig-headed, clear-sighted, candid, loving, embarrassing, unyielding, and above all, mesmerizing.