



STUTTGART BOOK CLUB READING GUIDE

The True and Outstanding Adventures of the Hunt Sisters by Elizabeth Robinson

About This Book

Olivia Hunt's Hollywood life has come to a grinding halt. A hotshot producer accustomed to first-class amenities, Olivia has just been unceremoniously fired after her last movie tanked. Her boyfriend, Michael, has dumped her. And she's not the blonde she used to be: dark roots are coming in at an alarming rate. Her next project is a well-crafted suicide note.

Then she finds out what real trouble is. Olivia's beloved sister, Maddie, is seriously ill. Maddie is living the life Olivia ran like hell from--she's happily married to her high school sweetheart and still living in the small town where they grew up. Stunned and bewildered, Olivia catches the next plane back home.

Maddie's idealism and optimism have always driven Olivia crazy. Even now, when the odds aren't good, Maddie never doubts she'll beat them. But Olivia wonders, is hope just a way of kidding yourself? As if to answer that question, Maddie challenges Olivia to produce her dream film, the impossible-to-make *Don Quixote*. Olivia's life then becomes a tangle of movie sets, IV drips, and letters to Michael asking him what went wrong and if they might try again. When Maddie takes a turn for the worse, Olivia has to face the hardest choices life can offer. How can one person's heart so truly be in three places at once?

Imbued with all the love one sister can feel for another--and all the frustration too--*The True and Outstanding Adventures of the Hunt Sisters* is heartbreaking and hilarious, somber and delightful, and full of wisdom, joy, and grace. It is a brilliantly written debut about the unlimited possibilities of love and how hope can grow in even the darkest places.

Discussion Questions

1. The Hunt sisters, Olivia and Maddie, are very different from each other. As you were reading, did you like one of the sisters better than the other? Which of the Hunt sisters do you most identify with? How would you describe the relationship between the sisters? Are Olivia and Maddie like any sisters you know?
2. The story is told entirely in letters, all of them written by one character. What did you enjoy about this form? How well did you get to know all the novel's characters? Which letters are your favorites? In which do you think Olivia is most revealing? most truthful?
3. The epigraph suggests that hope is a kind of happiness. Do you think that's true? Does Olivia believe that? How does her attitude about hope change? What about Maddie's? Do you consider hope a delusion? Or a choice?
4. Why does Olivia start writing to her ex-boyfriend Michael? Does she get what she wants—or what she needs? Do you think Michael and Olivia belong together?
5. Are there parallels between the themes in *Don Quixote* and in this novel? *Don Quixote*'s idealism ultimately inspires his cynical friend Sancho. Is Maddie or Olivia most like *Don Quixote*? Does that change at different points in the novel?
6. At various times, Olivia is forced to make sacrifices for work, love, and family. Which is most important to her in the beginning . . . and at the end? Which story line did you find most compelling?
7. There are four couples in the book. Which couple's relationship did you understand best? Is any of them similar to a relationship you've been in? What does Olivia learn about relationships by observing other couples?
8. Would you want the job of a Hollywood producer? What do you find interesting or appealing about the job? Do you think Olivia will continue to produce movies?
9. Did you like having real celebrities interact with the novel's fictional characters?
10. What do you think of the portrayal of doctors in the novel? Olivia writes some angry letters to doctors. Was she right—or just upset? Have you ever written that kind of letter?
11. Maddie's struggle with leukemia brings Olivia (and Maddie) face to face with questions of faith. What does faith mean to Olivia? How do her beliefs differ from Maddie's? Do they change in the course of the novel? Does Olivia reach any conclusions about God? How did your own ideas about faith influence your reactions to Olivia's and Maddie's questions?

Author Biography

Elisabeth Robinson is an independent producer and screenwriter whose film credits include the award-winning films *Braveheart* and *Last Orders*. This is her first novel. She lives in New York.
