

Readers' Group Guide to The Book of Jeremiah

1. Do you like Jeremiah as a person? With which of his traits do you identify, and conversely, which traits do you dislike?
2. How does Molly function as a foil to her husband? How does the marriage grow or shift over the course of their lives? Does the relationship remind you of any couples you know?
3. Which decisions or actions of Jeremiah as a husband, father, and professional be traced to his earlier life experiences? What role do Rikki, Abe, and Lenny play in shaping Jeremiah's personality?
4. Discuss Jeremiah's approach to his children. How similar or different does he seem to his own mother and father?
5. How does Jeremiah change over the course of the book? Why do you think the author decided to structure the novel in a non-linear fashion?
6. Which cultural, political, religious, or ethnic forces shape the characters' lives? Do you know people who are similar to Jeremiah, Molly and their families? Do you identify with any of the characters?
7. Is Jeremiah satisfied with his choice of career? Why/why not? What does Jeremiah seek, and how do his desires change as he gets older?
8. Jeremiah deeply loves his wife yet does not always act in ways that are considerate of her. How do you reconcile his behavior and actions?
9. Discuss the themes of guilt and grief. Do you see parallels between any of the characters in the ways they handle traumas, crises, or mistakes?
10. How does Jeremiah's view of his brother change over the course of the book? What effect does Lenny's death have on Jeremiah?
11. What do you make of Jeremiah's public behavior versus his private behavior? Between Molly, Hannah and Stuart, who is most effective at handling him?
12. Hannah vacillates between thinking of her mother as having tremendous inner strength and someone who is inherently weak. Can a person be both at the same time? What do you think of Molly?
13. What role does Judaism play in Jeremiah and Molly's lives? How is their relationship to religion and culture similar/different to yours?