



Discussion Guide for Cassandra Montag's *After the Flood*.

By Susan Maguire.

Kassandra Montag's debut, *After the Flood* (2019), is a timely story that combines themes of survival, trust, grief, and what we owe each other with nail-biting action. That means it's ripe for discussion. **Here are a few questions to get your book group conversation off to a good start.**

After the Flood takes place in a time when the world has become so flooded that only the highest mountain peaks are above water, villages are being rebuilt from scraps, and most people have to take to the sea to survive. Even though this is an imaginary Earth that exists a little over a hundred years into the future, do you think the novel says anything about the way we live now?

We find out about the Hundred Year Flood, and then the more severe Six Year Flood, but not about what caused them. What do you think caused the catastrophic flooding? Why do you think Montag left that information out of the narrative?

Myra talks about what is and isn't passed between generations: her grandfather taught her to read the water in order to catch fish; she realizes Pearl will grow up with no concept of museums or bubble baths. What skill would you pass on to the next generation? What memory of a

nonessential item or experience would you share? What lessons do you think Pearl is learning from Myra?

Myra is, well, let's say complicated. She struggles with trusting other people, and while she herself is not entirely trustworthy, she's far from amoral. Did any of the decisions she made make you rethink your assessment of her character? Is it important for a character to be "likable" for you to feel a connection to them?

Late in the book, when Myra asks Marjan how she copes with so much grief and loss, Marjan says, "You do the hardest thing. The most impossible thing. Again and again." (p. 325) What does she mean by that? Do you agree? Do you think the same is true of all the characters in the book who suffered loss?