

## AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

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Amanda Eyre Ward is the author of *Sleep Toward Heaven*, *How to Be Lost*, *Love Stories in This Town*, *Forgive Me*, *Close Your Eyes*, *The Same Sky*, *The Nearness of You*, and *The Jetsetters*. Her bestselling novels have been featured in *People Magazine*, *The New York Times*, and more. Amanda's work has been optioned for film and television and translated into fifteen languages. She lives in Austin, TX and Ouray, CO. Amanda currently writes every morning and spends afternoons with her children. - Author's website

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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1. Discuss the many mother-daughter relationships at the core of the novel. How does Charlotte's relationship with her mother impact her relationship with her own daughters?
2. What do you think of Lee's decision to rig the "Become a Jetsetter" contest? What kinds of boundaries is she crossing, and do you think her actions are justified? How does Ward explore ideas of privacy and boundaries between loved ones in the novel?
3. Which character did you like the best, and why?
4. How would this story be different if it didn't take place on a cruise? How was the plot shaped by the confined cruise ship setting?
5. Discuss how the book handles the matter of age. Do you think there are different societal expectations for people of certain ages? How do you see those expectations represented or subverted in this book? How does that apply to the portrayal of female desire in the novel, particularly for Charlotte?
6. Did you look for yourself or elements of your own family dynamic in this novel? What aspects of the familial relationships in this book did you find relatable?

7. If you had to enter the “Become a Jetsetter” contest, what would your story be about?
8. Why does Cord seem to have an especially difficult time coming out to his family? In what ways does his family mishandle his coming out, and what could they have done differently?
9. How does Winston’s alcoholism and mistreatment of his family impact them later in life?
10. Leo Tolstoy once wrote that “All happy families are alike; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.” After reading this novel, do you agree? Why or why not?
11. Discuss two of the main themes of the novel: love and truth. How are these themes at odds, and how do they work together?

- <https://www.readinggroupguides.com/reviews/the-jetsetters/guide>

## BOOK REVIEWS

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### Kirkus Reviews

A lonely 71-year-old widow wins a trip to Europe and takes her three grown children in an attempt to reconnect with them. One-time mediocre realtor and long-time widow Charlotte Perkins lives in Savannah, Georgia. When her best friend dies, she realizes just how lonely she has become and how she has lost touch with her grown children, two of whom refuse to speak to each another. Charlotte believes that her eldest daughter, Lee, is an actress on the cusp of success in Los Angeles; that her son, Cord, is a successful venture capitalist in New York City waiting to find the right woman; and that her youngest, Regan, is a happily married stay-at-home mother of two. She doesn't know that Lee is in massive debt, cannot find work, and is living in a La Quinta hotel; that Cord is a struggling-to-stay-sober alcoholic who is happily engaged to a man he adores; and that Regan dreams of murdering her detested husband, whom she regrets marrying after her sister broke his heart. Charlotte herself is not the pious Catholic Church lady everyone thinks she is—she is desperate to find a man, have sex, and live out the naughty pages of her romance books. Everyone in the family is adept at hiding their emotions and themselves from one another. Charlotte hopes to bring them all together again by entering a contest for a cruise through Europe. And she wins. Author Ward (*The Nearness of You*, 2017, etc.) has created a complex story that explores the tragedies and long-term effects of withheld love, verbal abuse, alcoholism, and depression on individuals and their families, set against the backdrop of a splendidly gaudy, over-the-top Mediterranean cruise ship and its historic ports of call. Open, optimistic, caring, romantic, and thoughtful Giovanni—Cord's fiancée—is a highlight of the book. No one, and no relationship, is perfect in this story, which embraces the messiness of love and life. (Kirkus Reviews, January 1, 2020).

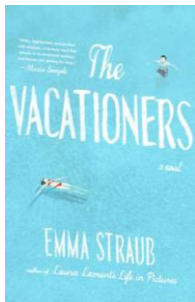
### Booklist

When Charlotte Perkins wins a Mediterranean cruise in an essay contest, she sees it as the perfect opportunity to reconnect with her adult children; beautiful actress Lee, perpetually single Cord, and perfect housewife Regan. All three are their own kinds of messed up. Lee's career has floundered and she is newly single and homeless. Cord is engaged to his boyfriend, assuring him that on this trip he will come out to his family. And Regan's husband insists on coming along, even though she needs a break from pretending their marriage isn't falling apart. And all three blame Charlotte's repressive, Catholic insistence on everything being fine, yet all three feel responsible for their widowed mother. As the *Splendido Marveloso* travels from Greece to Malta to Italy, the Perkins' desperate

attempts to both keep up appearances and tell their truths are interrupted by port-city excursions and mandatory cruise-ship fun. Each character's dysfunctions run deep, and each plot twist threatens to sink their sanity, resulting in a funny, moving tale of the complications of familial love.--Susan Maguire Copyright 2020 Booklist

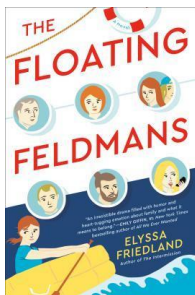
## READALIKES

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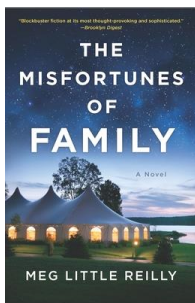
### ***The Vacationers* by Emma Straub**

Celebrating their thirty-fifth anniversary and their daughter's high-school graduation during a two-week vacation in Mallorca, Franny and Jim Post confront old secrets, hurts, and rivalries that reveal sides of themselves they try to conceal.



### ***The Floating Feldmans* by Elyssa Friedland**

Organizing a family reunion cruise for her 70th birthday in the hopes of resolving long estrangements, Annette reveals difficult secrets that challenge long-held perceptions about the more troublesome members of her clan.



### ***The Misfortunes of Family* by Meg Little Reilly**

The Bright family is the picture of perfection -- attractive, competitive and a bit badly behaved. As the four adult sons of retired senator John Bright head with their partners to the annual family reunion, they have everything they need, except self-awareness. As petty jealousies surface, Philip, the youngest, reveals a surprising personal decision that earns the ribbing--or is it scorn?--of his brothers. Then the senator unexpectedly announces his desire for another political run. Suddenly closely held family secrets start tumbling out and keep coming, including the biggest one that will rock this family to the core.