

## STUDY GUIDE

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## *THE WINTER BOY*

### BY SALLY WIENER GROTTA

This study guide is provided free of any charge to book clubs, teachers and others wishing to conduct a group discussion about *The Winter Boy* by Sally Wiener Grotta. If your group develops other questions that prove to lead to energized, interesting discussions, please share them with us, and we may add them to future iterations of this study guide.

## SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

The following are the author's suggested questions to discuss.

- ◆ If you were to create a culture or society from scratch, with the hope of it being one of peace, how would you have gone about doing it?
- ◆ What fatal flaws did the Alleshine world have? Or are the flaws within human beings?
- ◆ How many names have you had in your lifetime? How did they represent different relationships or different aspects of you and your life at the time?
- ◆ What do you think of Kiv? What do you think of what she did? Was it entirely out of love for the Peace, or other more personal reasons - or both? What would you have done, if you felt the way she did?
- ◆ What do you think of the idea of using sexuality and intimacy to teach young men how to be leaders? How have the deep bonds you have shared with special people in your life changed you? What did you learn from them? Was the depth of your learning and alteration related to the depth of the relationship?
- ◆ If you were an Allesha or Alleman, what would you do to save the Peace?
- ◆ What do you think of the Guardian Alleshi? Are they necessary? Or do they subvert the essence of the Alleshine Peace?
- ◆ Can you save lives by taking lives? Does preparing for war assure that there will be a war? Or does the nature of humanity require always being ready to protect yourself and your loved ones?
- ◆ What do you think would have happened to Jinet if she hadn't become an Allesha? What makes her the right fit for Ryl? Would Ryl have become an Alleman with some other Allesha? Was there anything unique about their pairing, or was it the system of training that gave him what he needed to mature?
- ◆ How would you define Ryl/Dov's love for Tayar? What are the differences and similarities to his love for Lilla? Can one man love two women? Can a boy be in love with a woman older than his mother?
- ◆ Do you blame Mistral for starting a war? What would you have done in a similar situation?
- ◆ Was Caith wise or foolish to confront Kiv about her plans? Why? If you were Caith, would you have released the guns?

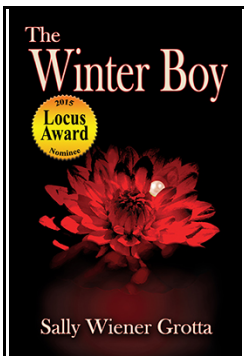
## CONNECTING WITH THE AUTHOR

Sally Wiener Grotta gives lectures and conducts workshops based on the themes of *Jo Joe* and her other works. To find out more about her programs, and view related videos, please go to [SallyWienerGrotta.com](http://SallyWienerGrotta.com)

Sally is also available to chat with book clubs, classes and other discussion groups about *The Winter Boy*, often via Skype or Zoom (minimum of 8 people). Depending on her schedule, a personal appearance may be possible.

## ABOUT *THE WINTER BOY* BY SALLY WIENER GROTTA

*Reminiscent of Margaret Atwood, Mary Doria Russell and Ursula K. LeGuin, The Winter Boy explores important political and social issues within a dynamic, character-driven otherworld, wrapped up in masterful storytelling.*



The Valley of the Alleshi is the center of all civilization, the core and foundation of centuries of peace. A cloistered society of widows, the Alleshi, has forged a peace by mentoring young men who will one day become the leaders of the land. Each boy is paired with a single Allesha for a season of intimacy and learning, using time-honored methods that include dialogue, reason and sex. However, unknown to all but a hidden few, the peace is fracturing from pressures within and beyond, hacking at the very essence of their civilization.

Amidst this gathering political maelstrom, Rishana, a young new idealistic Allesha, takes her First Boy, Ryl, for a winter season of training. But Ryl is a “problem boy” who fights Rishana every step of the way. At the same time, Rishana uncovers a web of conspiracies that could not only destroy Ryl, but threaten to tear their entire society apart. And a winter that should have been a gentle, quiet season becomes one of conflict, anger and danger.

Discounts on volume purchases of *The Winter Boy* (or other Pixel Hall Press books) are available for book discussion groups and classes.

## ABOUT SALLY WIENER GROTTA

Whether she is writing books, taking photographs or leading a workshop, Sally Wiener Grotta ([www.SallyWienerGrotta.com](http://www.SallyWienerGrotta.com)) is the consummate storyteller. Her words and pictures reflect her deep humanism and appreciation for the poignancy of life.



A full-time award-winning freelance writer, Sally has traveled on assignment throughout the world, covering a wide diversity of cultures and traditions. Her hundreds of stories, columns, essays and reviews have appeared in scores of magazines, newspapers and journals, such as *American Heritage*, *Popular Science*, *North Atlantic Review*, *Islands*, *PC Magazine*, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Woman's Day*, *Parade* and many others. Among her numerous books are the novels *The Winter Boy* (a 2015 Locus Award nominee) and *Jo Joe* (selected as a Jewish Book Council Network book).

Sally's far-ranging experiences flavor her stories and presentations with a sense of wonder and otherliness, plus a healthy dose of common sense. A popular speaker, Sally has appeared in venues large and small throughout North America, plus on radio and TV. With her wide-ranging knowledge, and her lively, personable style, Sally inspires her audiences to tap into their own creativity, to ask themselves questions they might not have considered previously, and to seek new solutions together. She also has a reputation for stimulating open, meaningful discussions about creativity, storytelling, the business of writing, and the nature of bias and prejudice.

## ABOUT PIXEL HALL PRESS

Pixel Hall Press ([www.PixelHallPress.com](http://www.PixelHallPress.com)) is a relatively new, old-fashioned small publishing house whose focus is on discovering literary gems and great stories that might have otherwise been overlooked. Our mission is to publish books that energize the imagination and intrigue the mind, and to be a conduit between readers and provocative, stimulating, talented authors.

In this era of digital technology, Wall Street involvement and merger mania, mainstream publishers seem to have lost sight of the core principles and purpose of publishing. At the other end of the spectrum is an avalanche of self-published books that are notoriously uneven in quality. Small boutique imprints, such as Pixel Hall Press, are reclaiming the heart and soul of publishing by reviving the idea that a publisher's *raison d'être* is to find and nurture great writers, and to provide readers with beautiful, meaningful, truly enjoyable books.

If you have any questions or requests, or wish to connect with our authors, please contact Cynthia Dadson ([Cynthia@PixelhallPress.com](mailto:Cynthia@PixelhallPress.com)).