

BOOK CLUB NEWS
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The Race for Paris, by Meg Waite Clayton

Discussion Leader: Don Markley



Thinking that writing was an impossible dream, Meg Waite Clayton went off to the University of Michigan to become a doctor, emerged as a corporate lawyer, and, at the age of 32, pregnant with her first child, began to realize her dream of becoming a writer. With friendship as a major theme, she became a successful and, as one of our club members, Donna who knows her, shared with us, Meg Clayton is passionate about encouraging writers as well. Readers and writers are invited to visit her website, rich in biography, writing technique tips and personal inspirations. <http://www.megwaiteclayton.com>.

Before Don had a chance to begin his leadership, discussion began on a negative note, and it was my fault. When I assumed the responsibility of coordinating the book club, I felt obligated to finish each selection to the very end. I began to re-think that policy and asked the readers in attendance if they thought I could be like any reader and not continue reading a book if it didn't "grab" me. When asked which book I didn't want to finish, I answered that it was this one, *The Race for Paris*. Readers said it was fine as long as I hold my comments until the go-around, just like anyone else.

Several readers complained that the narration wasn't engaging. One reader would have liked three narrators: Liz, Fletcher, Jane, which would have given us more insight to their character. Several readers said they couldn't connect with the characters. In a short time, however, discussion became more focused on the positive. One reader reminded us of some extraordinary sections, such as with the German soldier, the scene in the cave, and surgery by searchlight. This was followed pointedly by one reader exclaiming her love for the book with a strong connection to the characters. She was particularly impressed with Jane's effort to photograph; also, Jane reminded her of Scout had she gone to war. One reader found it helpful to understand the book as a road story, not a war story. Discussion continued on the meaning of the title, followed by the role of women journalists during the war. Several readers enjoyed the quotes from women journalists at the beginning of each chapter, encouraging some readers to learn more about these journalists. Significant discussion focused on the role of women journalists in the war that led to the Feminist Movement that blossomed during the middle of the last century.

During the go-around, readers were positive. Many readers found the story compelling, educational, thought-provoking, and a page-turner, wondering if the journalists would reach their goal. Some would like to read about the real journalists. Others enjoyed the characters and their relationships. Some liked the story during the second half, claiming that the first half was a push. One reader would have enjoyed this book as a novella. The value of this book is to

illuminate war so we don't forget. One reader was grateful that it avoided the horrors of war after having read enough of that. Another was intrigued with the love triangle. Another was impressed by dedication of the journalists.

Thank you, Don, for your willingness to lead a discussion on a book you did not nominate. Having different readers lead discussion is one of the strengths of our club. We will continue talking about the Feminist Movement next month. Join us October 21 for our discussion of *My Life on the Road*, by Gloria Steinem led by Moira Johannessen. Happy reading!

