

*book club
kit*

THE
SENATOR'S
WIFE

LIV CONSTANTINE



Dear Reader,

Thank you so much for choosing *The Senator's Wife* for your book club. We hope you find it to be an exciting thrill ride and also enjoy getting to know the players. There is a strong thread of friendship in *The Senator's Wife* and these characters are some of our favorites.

We're often asked to talk about our inspiration for a story. The twist inspired this one. We knew from the start what our major twist was going to be and couldn't wait to develop the story. We also wanted a fresh setting and thought that the world of Washington, D.C. would be a fun and fascinating place in which to set the story. Years ago, both Valerie and our father worked in D.C. on the staffs of the President and Vice President. Even though many things were different then, what hasn't changed is the behind-the-scenes power plays, the disloyalties and betrayals, and the feeling of many politicians that they are untouchable and a world apart. Washington, D.C. is a small and insular town, far removed from the general population. And what is more glamorous than an invitation to the White House? Of course, we also did research to authenticate White House protocol and other aspects of life and work in our nation's capital.

We hope that you love reading *The Senator's Wife* as much as we loved writing it and that this book club kit inspires exciting and interesting conversations.

Warm regards,

Liv (Lynne & Valerie) Constantine

Discussion Questions

1. *The Senator's Wife* opens with a scene of Sloane, Robert, Whit, and Peg that quickly devolves into chaos, uncertainty, and the death of Robert and Peg. How did the seeds of mistrust in this scene set the tone for the rest of the novel? Why do you think the author chose to start at this point in the story and then jump ahead two years?
2. The character of Athena is introduced to the reader from the very beginning as someone representing themselves under a false identity, saying, "They'll never know I haven't worked for a charity before." What impression did this leave you with for Athena's true identity? At what points did your suspicions change over the course of the novel?
3. Between Sloane's illness and Athena's false identity, there is a lot of unreliable narration throughout *The Senator's Wife*. Did you believe Athena was working to bring down Sloane? What was the experience of this narration like for you as a reader?
4. The setting of Washington, D.C. and the political world therein plays a large part in the novel. Describe the way that the author uses the setting to reveal details about the characters and the plot.
5. *The Senator's Wife* explores a number of themes, including family, secrets, memory, privilege, and betrayal. Which theme resonated the most for you and why?
6. How effective was the author's use of plot twists and red herrings? Were you able to predict certain elements of the narrative, or were you guessing until the end?
7. How did the side characters of Doris, Rosemary, and Madelyn impact your read of the story?
8. Which scene in the book stuck with you the most?
9. Discuss the ending of the novel. Were you surprised by the final twist? Which twist shocked you the most?



WHO'S
Who

Sloane

Activist

Wife of Robert and, later, Whit

Robert

Sloane's husband

Peg's cousin

United States Senator

Deceased

Emmy

Sloane and Robert's daughter

Whit

Sloane's second husband

United States Senator

Peg

Robert's cousin

Whit's first wife

Deceased

Madelyn

Wife of D.C. heavyweight

Rosemary

Robert's mother

Camille

Robert's sister

Doris

Sloane's longtime housekeeper

Athena

Caretaker for Sloane

Up to no good?

Sloane's Favorite Cocktail:

DEATH IN THE AFTERNOON ERNEST HEMINGWAY

This potent mixture of absinthe and Champagne shares a name with Hemingway's 1932 book about Spanish bullfighting. Supposedly, the drink was created by the author after enjoying absinthe during his time in France. Death in the Afternoon was also his contribution to *So Red the Nose, or Breath in the Afternoon*, a 1935 cocktail book featuring recipes from 30 celebrity authors.

(Courtesy of liquor.com)

INGREDIENTS

1 ½ oz. absinthe

4 ½ oz. chilled Champagne (preferably Cristal)

STEPS

Pour the absinthe into a coupe.

Top slowly with Champagne.





Athena's Specialty:
**THE BLACK
WIDOW**

INGREDIENTS

1 oz. raspberry liquor
½ oz. agave nectar
1 oz. vodka
2 oz. pomegranate syrup
2 oz. seltzer water
Simple syrup
Black sprinkles or red sanding sugar
1 ½ cups of ice
Mint and strawberries to garnish

STEPS

Rim glass with sprinkles or sanding sugar, set aside. In a blender, add all ingredients and blend for about 30 seconds. Pour into glass and garnish.

Rosemary's Go to Drink:

THE RUTH BADER GIN-SBURG

INGREDIENTS

1 ½ oz. Malfy lemon gin

¾ oz. Cointreau

¾ oz. lime juice

¾ oz. simple syrup

STEPS

Mix all ingredients in shaker and add ice. Shake and strain over ice, and garnish with Meyer lemon peel.



Credit: Sara Bradley, chef/proprietor of Freight House in Paducah, KY, created this recipe in February 2019 to honor the Supreme Court Justice. cheersonline.com/2020/09/23/ruth-bader-gin-sburg/

Whit's Standard:

THE RICKEY

The Gin Rickey is a highball cocktail made with gin, soda water, and lime juice. It was invented in the 1880s with bourbon, then became very popular with gin in the 1890s. The story goes that a Democratic politician named Colonel Joe Rickey made up the drink in a Washington, D.C. bar with the help of the bartender there.

The drink rose to worldwide popularity and is even mentioned in books like the 1920s novel *The Great Gatsby*. Though it's a simple drink, the rickey connects to a centuries-long tradition of mixing booze and carbonated water.

INGREDIENTS

Gin (Whit likes Hendricks)
Soda water or club soda
Fresh squeezed lime

STEPS

Add the gin and lime juice to highball glass and stir. Fill with ice and top with sparkling water. Garnish with a lime wedge.



Washington, D.C. Recommendations

SLOANE'S FAVORITE HAUNTS

DINNER AND DRINKS

[Martin's Tavern](#) in Georgetown—if you're lucky you can eat in the booth where JFK proposed to Jackie!

When she's in a literary mood she grabs a drink at [Gatsby](#) in the Navy Yard, a stone's throw from National's Park where you can root for our hometown baseball team.

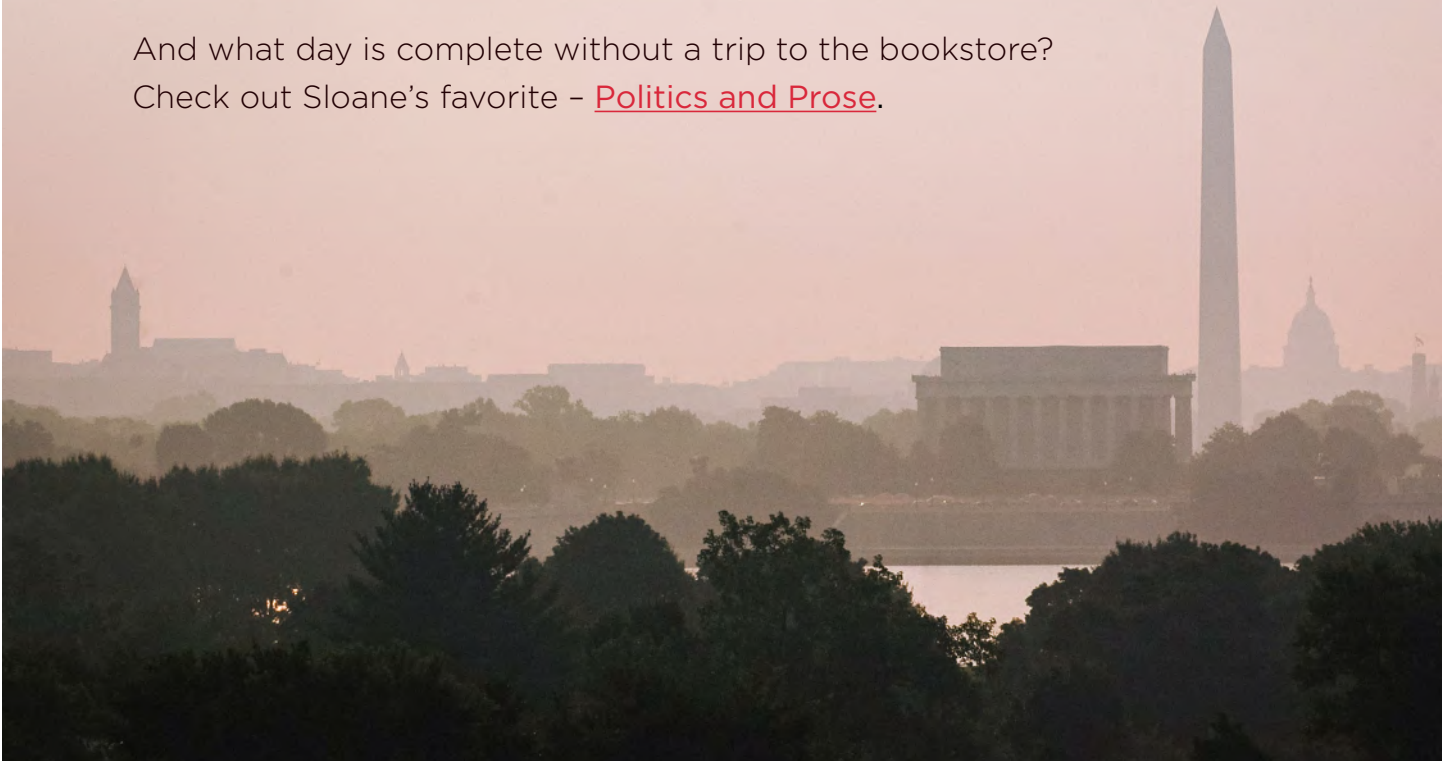
IS IT YOUR CHEAT DAY?

Consider going to the historic [Ben's Chili Bowl](#) for one of their famous "half-smokes" and admire the murals while you're there.

BEAUTIFUL SUNNY DAY?

Nothing beats walking the [National Mall](#) (it's not a shopping mall!). Consider taking the Metro to Chinatown and starting at the [National Portrait Gallery](#), then walking down to the Mall, taking the path past the [Washington Monument](#) and strolling to the inspiring [Lincoln Memorial](#). Good exercise and plenty of museum stops on the way.

And what day is complete without a trip to the bookstore?
Check out Sloane's favorite - [Politics and Prose](#).





FOR MORE

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