

***Motherhood Exaggerated***  
**By Judith Hannan Reading Group Guide**

Q: For the person who chose this book: What made you want to read it? What made you suggest it to the group for discussion?

Q: What is most compelling about memoirs as a genre of nonfiction? Are true--life stories potentially more powerful than fictional ones? Why or why not?

Q: Why do you think Judith Hannan wrote this book?

Q: Why do you think the book is entitled *Motherhood Exaggerated*?

Q: Ms. Hannan is extremely candid in *Motherhood Exaggerated* about her relationship with her husband and children. How did her honesty affect you?

Q: Music is a re-occurring element in *Motherhood Exaggerated*—when describing her distance to Nadia, her mother's death, etc. Why do you think Ms. Hannan decided to incorporate music as an element?

Q: Nature is also another strong element in the book. How does Ms. Hannan describe nature and how is this effective?

Q: Memoirs and fiction can be quite similar. How are the choices a writer makes in writing autobiography different from those made in writing fiction?

Q: Consider the structure of *Motherhood Exaggerated*. What decisions has Ms. Hannan made in shaping the story of her life? What is emphasized? What is left out? How is the passage of time presented?

Q: Which aspects of the characters found in *Motherhood*

*Exaggerated* do you identify with most and least? How does your reaction to the writer affect your experience of the book?

Q: How does Ms. Hannan approach her own story? With a sense of irony, sympathy, distance, comedy, or something else entirely?

Q: How much does Ms. Hannan's character change over the course of the memoir?

Q: Many book reviewers and culture commentators claim that in the past several years we have witnessed a "memoir explosion." Why has this genre become so popular with readers and writers alike?

Q: What are the benefits and drawbacks of writers sharing an intimate view of their lives with the general public?

Q: Compare this book to other memoirs your group has read. Is it similar to any of them?

Q: What is *Motherhood Exaggerated's* impact on you? How does the memoir you have just read change the way you think about your own life story?