

Martin County Library System Book Discussion Kit:

## The Women by Kristin Hannah

Included in the Kit:

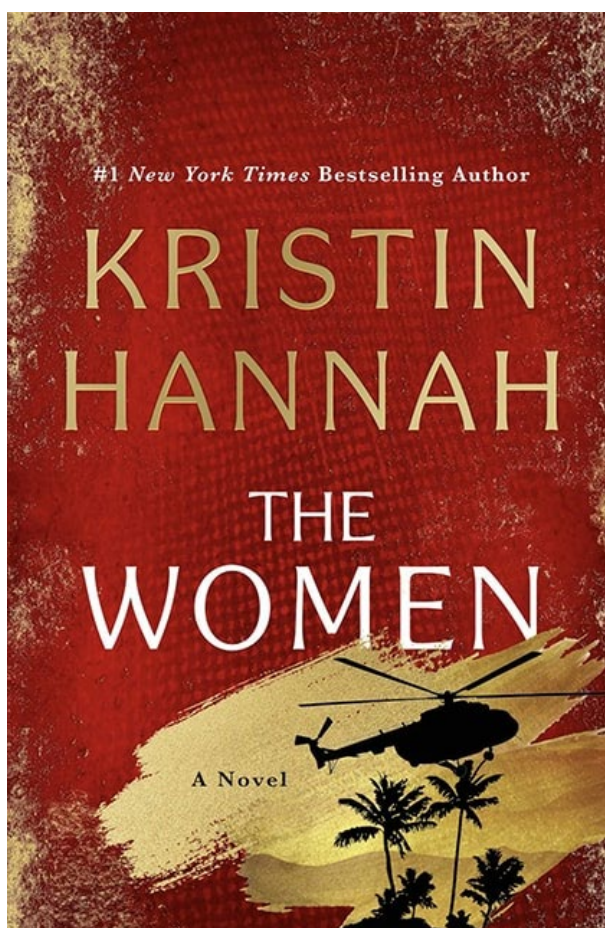
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Book summary

“Women can be heroes, too.”

When twenty-year-old nursing student Frances “Frankie” McGrath hears these unexpected words, it is a revelation. Raised on idyllic Coronado Island and sheltered by her conservative parents, she has always prided herself on doing the right thing, being a good girl. But in 1965 the world is changing, and she suddenly imagines a different choice for her life. When her brother ships out to serve in Vietnam, she impulsively joins the Army Nurse Corps and follows his path.

As green and inexperienced as the men sent to Vietnam to fight, Frankie is overwhelmed by the chaos and destruction of war, as



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well as the unexpected trauma of coming home to a changed and politically divided America.

*The Women* is the story of one woman gone to war, but it shines a light on the story of all women who put themselves in harm's way to help others. Women whose sacrifice and commitment to their country has all too often been forgotten. A novel of searing insight and lyric beauty, *The Women* is a profoundly emotional, richly drawn story with a memorable heroine whose extraordinary idealism and courage under fire define a generation.

Source: <https://kristinhannah.com/books/the-women/>





# *The Women* by Kristin Hannah

## Meet the Author

Kristin Hannah is the award-winning and bestselling author of more than 20 novels including the international blockbuster, *The Nightingale*, which was named Goodreads Best Historical fiction novel for 2015 and won the coveted People's Choice award for best fiction in the same year. Additionally, it was a selection of the Reese Witherspoon Book Club in 2023. It was named a Best Book of the Year by *Amazon*, *iTunes*, *Buzzfeed*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *Paste*, and *The Week*. In 2018, *The Great Alone* became an instant *New York Times* #1 bestseller and was named the Best Historical Novel of the Year by Goodreads.

*The Four Winds* was published in February of 2021 and immediately hit #1 on the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today*, and Indie bookstores' bestseller lists. Additionally, it was selected as a book club pick by both the *Today Show* and the *Book of the Month Club*, which named it the best book of 2021.

*The Nightingale* is currently in production at Tri Star, with Dakota and Elle Fanning set to star. Tri Star has also optioned *The Great Alone* and it is in development. *Firefly Lane*, her beloved novel about two best friends, was the #1 Netflix series around the world, in the week it came out. The popular tv show stars Katherine Heigl and Sarah Chalke.

A former attorney, Kristin lives in the Pacific Northwest.



Source: <https://kristinhannah.com/about-kristin-bio/>



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## Discussion Questions

1. What did you know about the military and/or the Vietnam War before reading this book? Did this book change what you thought? If you were alive during that time, what do you remember?
2. How would things have been different if the events in the book had taken place now rather than 50 years ago? Would veterans be treated the same? Would the expectations of women have been the same? Would there have been better support for mental health issues? What issues from the book are still prevalent?
3. What do you think of the book's title: *The Women*? Why did society (including veterans themselves) not want to acknowledge the role women played in the war?
4. Throughout the story, Frankie talks about being a "good girl." What did that mean to her at the beginning? How did that change through her experiences in Vietnam, experiencing love, and returning home? If she hadn't been a "good girl" with Jamie at the beginning, would their love be the same?
5. Discuss Frankie's relationships to her best friends (Ethel and Barb) and how they continued through the years. Each woman had their own experiences in Vietnam and returning home—how were they different and how were they similar?
6. Frankie's relationship with her parents goes through a few evolutions throughout the book. She talks about them coming from the "quieter generation"—what did she learn about them throughout the book? What did you think of her mother? Her father?
7. Do you think Rye loved Frankie? Did you believe him, or did you have suspicions? Do you think there is such a thing as one true love?
8. Frankie had several tragic events and was betrayed more than once—which do you think was the hardest for her to deal with?
9. What did you think of the ending and Jamie returning? Why do you think he didn't reach out when he first returned home? How would Frankie's life





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have been different if they had reconnected earlier? Or if she had known he was still alive?

10. In the author's note, Kristin Hannah mentions that she originally had planned on using fictional names and locations for the story...why do you think it was so important for the military members to have the real names used? She also mentions that although she'd had this idea for a while, it took her a few years to write it, because she didn't feel ready—why do you think that is?

Source: <https://travelbooksandmovies.com/reading/f/book-club-guide-the-women-by-kristin-hannah>

## Recipes

### Cheesy pigs in a blanket

- 1 can refrigerated crescent roll dough
- 20 cocktail wieners
- 1/4 cup cheese, shredded
- 1 egg
- 2 teaspoons cream
- 1 tablespoon sesame seeds, toasted



Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly coat a baking sheet with cooking spray or line it with parchment paper.

Unroll refrigerated crescent dough, breaking into 4 square sections. Pinch together perforated sections and cut into 5 1-inch strips.

Place a pinch of shredded cheese on the edge of each strip, topping with a cocktail wiener and then rolling all the way up. Place on the cooking sheet seam side down.

Repeat with remaining crescent dough and cocktail wieners.

If desired, whisk together egg and cream. Lightly baste the top of each cheesy pig in a blanket and then sprinkle with sesame seeds.

Bake for 13-15 minutes or until the tops are browned. Serve with honey mustard, BBQ or ketchup sauce.

Source: <https://www.savoryexperiments.com/cheesy-pigs-in-a-blanket/#wprm-recipe-container-18093>

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## Mai Tai mocktail

- 1 liter orange juice
- 1 liter pineapple juice
- 1/2 cup lime juice
- 1/2 cup almond syrup
- 1/2 cup grenadine
- 1 liter sparkling/seltzer water
- ice
- oranges, limes, cherries for garnish



In a pitcher mix, together orange juice, pineapple juice, lime juice and almond syrup.

You can keep this punch base in the fridge until party time.

Once ready to serve you can serve in individual glasses by adding ice to a cup, filling the cup 1/2 full of juice, adding a splash of grenadine and then topping it off with seltzer water and garnishing with fruit.

To serve in a big punch bowl, mix grenadine and seltzer water to juice and stir together, then add ice and fruit.

Source: <https://lizoncall.com/mai-tai-mocktail-party-punch/>

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