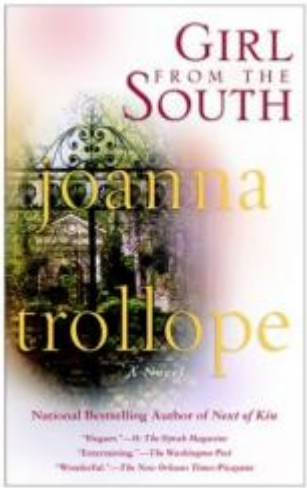
Girl From the South

by Joanna Trollope



About the Book

When it comes to penetrating and portraying the timeless complexities and dilemmas of everyday life, Joanna Trollope has no equal. In **Girl From the South** she displays her signature nuance, style, and warmth in a story of the boundaries between men and women, England and America, and what happens when we test the limits of family, friendship, and love.

Gillon Stokes is a girl from the South, but with her lack of convention and her disregard for makeup and the traditions of Southern femininity, she defies stereotype. When Gillon flees Charleston for a summer stint in London, she is befriended by the assured yet insecure Tilly. But when it's time for Gillon to return home, Tilly's boyfriend, Henry, follows her. A photographer, he falls in love with the wildlife of the South Carolina marshes, the Stokes family, and the entire South. And it is through his loving lens that everything is seen afresh and transformed.

Trollope's elegantly provocative novels have made her a bestselling favorite on both sides of the Atlantic. With this intercontinental new novel, tried-and-true fans and new readers alike will delight in Trollope's voyage to America.

Discussion Guide

1. This novel is about "being yourself" as much as "finding yourself." What does Gillon discover about herself during her stay in London? How does it change her?

2. In a way, when Gillon's life intersects with Henry's and Tilly's, she liberates both of them, though this is not immediately obvious. Discuss how this plays out.

3. Gillon thinks she needs to be free of her family and Henry longs to have one. Despite their very different backgrounds, though, Henry and Gillon are both struggling with the same issues of self-discovery. How do they help each other?

4. Ashley's post-partum depression reveals to her that aspects of her life have been oppressive and constraining. Why is childbirth cathartic? What role does Henry play in igniting her dissatisfaction?

5. Sarah's conservative etiquette and absolute conformity are treated as the family standard. Discuss the burden this must have placed on Martha. Is her emotional distance a result of Sarah's very proper tutelage?

6. In the end, one could feel that Sarah was the family member least true to herself--yet her example has

shaped her entire family. What does this teach us about individuality and self-confidence?

7. Both Gillon and Henry betray someone they love. Do you think the circumstances justify it? Explain.

8. The good news in **Girl From the South** is that it's never too late: In revealing the temptation of her youth, even Sarah discovers her true self. Do you think that Boone and Martha have a real chance to break free of the roles they've slipped into, so that their relationship can be authentic?

9. Do you think that Margot created a void in Tilly, a lack of selflove, by putting her own happiness first? How did this manifest itself in Tilly's life and how did it backfire in Margot's?

10. Family is obviously a central theme in **Girl From the South**. How does Gillon's role in her family change? How does she wind up setting an enormous example for everyone else?

Author Bio

Joanna Trollope is the author of 17 highly acclaimed contemporary bestselling novels, including, most recently, THE OTHER FAMILY, DAUGHTERS-IN-LAW and THE SOLDIER'S WIFE. She has also written a study of women in the British Empire, BRITANNIA'S DAUGHTERS, and 10 historical novels published under the pseudonym Caroline Harvey. Joanna was appointed OBE in the 1996 Queen's Birthday Honours List and was the chair of judges for the Orange Prize for Fiction in 2012.

Critical Praise

"An elegant read."

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