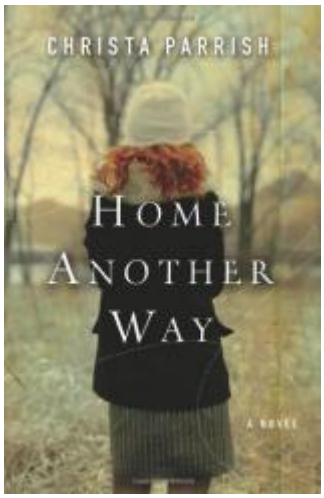
bookreporter

Home Another Way

by Christa Parrish



About the Book

Sarah Graham is living life hard and fast --- and she is flat broke. When her estranged father dies, she travels to the tiny mountain hamlet of Jonah, New York, to claim her inheritance. Once there, however, she learns that her plans for the future --- and her memories of the past --- are about to change forever.

Christa Parrish's debut novel is a captivating story of a broken, isolated woman and the flawed, faithful people who help her forgive and find peace.

HOME ANOTHER WAY © Copyright 2011 by Christa Parrish. Reprinted with permission by Bethany House. All rights reserved.

Discussion Guide

1. Sarah Graham has a rather rough personality, yet she's also been gifted with immense musical talent. Does this seem like a contradiction? Why does God bestow his mercies on those who seem not to "deserve" them, both in general, and particularly in Sarah's situation?

2. Have there been times you've encountered people who, like Sarah, have been wounded in life? How have you responded to them? Does knowing about their past hardships help you be more compassionate towards them? Would you have given Sarah as many chances as the people of Jonah did?

3. Sarah is quick to judge people, and at Thanksgiving, she's surprised when Memory doesn't eat dessert. "I'm fat for sure," Memory tells her, "but that don't make me a pig." As sinful people, we all judge others on things that matter so little in God's eyes --- weight, income, physical disability, cognitive ability. What are some ways you, personally, strive to overcome this tendency?

4. When do you think Sarah begins to truly change? What causes her to do so?

5. Much of the story is narrated in first person by Sarah, but there are also chapters written in third person from the point of view of Jack, Maggie, Beth, and Memory. Is anything gained by the novel being formatted this way? How would the book differ if it were only written from Sarah's perspective?

6. What character would you most like to have in your life? Which one least? Think about the character you'd least likely want in your own life. Why is that? Is it a valid reason?

7. Memory tells Sarah, “Ain’t nothing to do with good or bad. You just ain’t whole enough yet.” Do Christians judge people’s actions in regard to “good” or “bad?” Should they? What does it mean to be “whole”?

8. How did you react when you learned of Jack’s failing? When Sarah first hears of it, she thinks, He was no better than me. Do you ever react with relief at the sins of those around you? What did you think of the other townsfolk’s reactions? Do Christians hold those in authority to a higher standard? Should they?

9. Many of the people in Jonah have secrets. Jack, initially angry with Sarah for telling his, comes to liken his pain to the “glaring white spotlight upon him, burning the skin off a man who’d been hiding in the dark too long.” What does this mean, and have you ever felt this way? How do secrets impact the lives of others in the novel? How have they impacted your own life?

10. Throughout the novel, many people try to come alongside Sarah. Who are some of these characters, and why do they want to help her? Are their motives right or wrong? Does it matter? Is Sarah also valuable in the lives of others? Has God ever used someone you were trying to “help” to help you?

11. After Doc tells Sarah about her parents, she’s not satisfied with the answers. Doc says, “Sometimes not enough has to be enough.” Has there been a time in your life when you had to settle for “not enough”? How did you handle it?

12. What did you think of the end of the novel? Were you hoping for a different ending? Think about Sarah as the story concluded. Could it have ended differently and still stayed true to her character?

Author Bio

Christa Parrish is the award-winning author of four novels and founder of Breaking the Sea Ministries. She lives in upstate New York with her husband, pastor and writer Chris Coppernoll, and they have four children in their blended family. When not writing, she is creative director of *Concentric*, a contemporary "arts-based" worship service, co-leads her church's youth ministry, and produces a weekly radio show. She's at work on her fifth novel, and is now also slightly obsessed with baking wild yeast bread.

Home Another Way
by Christa Parrish

Publication Date: October 1, 2008
Genres: Christian, Fiction
Paperback: 352 pages
Publisher: Bethany House
ISBN-10: 0764205234
ISBN-13: 9780764205231