



## Reading Guide for *Three Fallen Women* by Amy Güth

### General Discussion Topics

1. For the person who chose this book: What made you want to read *Three Fallen Women*? What made you suggest it to the group for discussion? Did it live up to your expectations? Why or why not?
2. How is *Three Fallen Women* structured? Does Güth use any narrative devices like flashbacks or multiple voices in telling the story? How did this affect your reading of the story and your appreciation of the book? Do you think Güth did a good job with it?
3. Talk about Güth's use of language/writing style. Have each member read his or her favorite passage out loud. (You might want to warn them ahead of time that they'll be doing this so they'll be prepared.) How does this particular passage relate to the story as a whole? Does it reveal anything specific about any of the characters or illuminate certain aspects of the story?
4. What specific themes did Güth emphasize throughout the novel? What do you think she is trying to get across to the reader?
5. In what ways do the events in the books reveal evidence of Güth's worldview? What role do you see spirituality playing in the universe of *Three Fallen Women*?
6. Did certain parts of the book make you uncomfortable? If so,

why did you feel that way? Did this lead to a new understanding or awareness of some aspect of your life you might not have thought about before?

7. Is *Three Fallen Women*, in your opinion, a man-hating feminist novel, or does it put the responsibility upon women to save themselves from themselves, making it an entirely different sort of feminist novel? Or would you classify it as something else?

**From section one: Click Click (And We Will Wait To Be Saved)**

1. What does the neighbor in the book's opening symbolize? What tone does this opening set for the rest of the novel?

2. The use of string theory is one of the dominant images found throughout *Three Fallen Women*. What other uses of imagery did you find to be particularly effective?

3. In the reader's introduction to the character Zach, what themes emerge that continue in the remainder of the novel?

4. What does the deceased character Liam symbolize or denote for Carmen? How does her involvement with Jeremy both further aggravate and fill a void for her disrupted relationship with Liam?

5. What does Carmen's abortion symbolize? Is the timing of it in Carmen's life making a statement?

6. How is Jeremy's death a positive event for Carmen? How is it detrimental?

7. Where does the dynamic between Helen and Hannah repeat in the novel with other characters?

8. What was the shift in the dynamic between Elliot and Frieda?

**From section two: Romance of a Reconstructed Life From The Vital Pieces**

1. What is the crux of the underlying issue between David and Helen?

2. What change is occurring for Helen in the painting scene? What purpose do the mythological references serve?

3. What is the meaning of the ripple and vortex that Carmen sees? Is it a hallucination or something else?
4. What is the underlying issue in the email exchange between Helen and James that becomes so upsetting to her?
5. How do drains and food feature thematically so prominently in *Three Fallen Women*?
6. When the reader is introduced to the character Helen, she has recently entered recovery for myriad issues to include an eating disorder. We learn upon meeting Carmen that she struggles with addiction issues and Frieda is dealing with codependency and subsequent abuse issues. How do these women differ emotionally and how are they similar? What other emotional issues are addressed in the novel?
7. Thinking about Carmen's interaction with the vortex, what do the other characters regard in similar fashion in their own lives? What does the birth of Carmen's inner-child represent?
8. What does Andrew represent to Helen that David and Zach do not? What does Helen represent to Andrew?
9. What character do you find yourself identifying with most and why?
10. Where does sexuality fit within the larger themes of *Three Fallen Women*? How do sexual impulses drive the decisions that the characters make?
11. What does the neighbor's reappearance symbolize, if anything, for Helen?
12. How does the sexual abuse hinted at in Carmen's childhood most shape her adulthood?
13. What changes emotionally for Frieda once she finds the discarded scalpel?
14. How does the event in the airport affect Helen emotionally?
15. Why do you think Frieda felt compelled to kill the owner of the

diner?

16. What emotional shift occurs for Frieda during her interaction with the truck driver?

17. Why do you suppose Güth opted to animate Carmen's organs and explain their dying process?

**From section three: Redemptive Triads Usually Left Unsaid**

1. How do the thoughts of Zack and Helen differ in the bar scene?

2. What does the fountain represent in a personal, emotional and romantic sense for Helen and Zack? For Helen personally?

3. What symbolic or thematic connection does the fountain have with other drains and water sources in the novel?

4. How does Güth's use of mythology enhance the story?

5. Why does Helen dance alone and focus on her feet?

6. What image do you most identify with that Helen lists off in the section she dances?

7. Does Güth make her characters' actions, even the most dangerous actions, sympathetic to the reader? More specifically, is it understandable why the women acted as they did in each situation?

8. Why is Frieda's interaction in the car at the end more of a positive event for her than a negative one? What about the reverse?