



## *Hell Going by Lynn Coady*

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### **About the author:**

Lynn Coady is a Canadian novelist, editor and journalist, originally from Cape Breton Island, NS, now dividing her time between Edmonton and Toronto.

Her collection of short stories *Hellgoing* won the 2013 Scotiabank Giller Prize. Her 2011 novel, *The Antagonist*, was shortlisted for the 2011 Giller Prize and published by Alfred A. Knopf in the USA in January, 2013.

Follow her on Twitter @Lynn\_Coady and Facebook.

Source: Author's Website (<http://lynncoady.com>)

### **About this book:**

Winner of the 2013 Scotiabank Giller Prize.

Shortlisted for the Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize. Selected as an Amazon.ca Best Book and for The Globe's Top 10 Books of 2013.

With astonishing range and depth, Scotiabank Giller Prize winner Lynn Coady gives us nine unforgettable new stories, each one of them grabbing our attention from the first line and resonating long after the last.

A young nun charged with talking an anorexic out of her religious fanaticism toys with the thin distance between practicality and blasphemy. A strange bond between a teacher and a schoolgirl takes on ever deeper, and stranger, shapes as the years progress. A bride-to-be with a penchant for nocturnal bondage can't seem to stop bashing herself up in the light of day.

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Equally adept at capturing the foibles and obsessions of men and of women, compassionate in her humour yet never missing an opportunity to make her characters squirm, fascinated as much by faithlessness as by faith, Lynn Coady is quite possibly the writer who best captures what it is to be human at this particular moment in our history.

*Source: Publisher's Website (<http://houseofanansi.com/>)*

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. How do you think the epigraph by Philip Larkin ties into the stories in this collection? Do you think that it applies to any one story in particular and if so, how?
2. In "Wireless," Jane notices the roots of the icebergs and thinks, "this is just the beginning." What might the icebergs in "Wireless" symbolize? Why do they make such an impact on her?
3. How does the title of "Dogs in Clothes" relate to the story?
4. What does Sam realize about Marco at the end of "Dogs in Clothes?" What does she accuse him of?
5. Compare Catherine from "Take This and Eat It" with Erin from "An Otherworld." How are the two similar?
6. In "Clear Skies" Sara says, "There is no difference between fiction and memoir. . . they're all still going to be stories, no matter what category we



choose to put them in — fiction or non.” Do you agree with her? Why or why not?

7. In “The Natural Elements,” how does the title manifest in the story? What instances of natural elements appear in other stories in the collection, and what is the effect?
8. Describe Cal’s relationships with his daughter, Terry, and his tenant, Angie, in “The Natural Elements.” What does he value? How does this affect his relationships?
9. What might the cougar in “Body Condom” signify?
10. In “Body Condom,” what does Kim realize about herself in comparison to Hart?
11. What would you say “Mr. Hope” is really about? What aspects of the story led you to this understanding?
12. There are several overarching themes in *Hellgoing*: law and order, imprisonment and freedom, rebellion and rules, faithlessness and faith. Find examples of these themes in the collection and discuss how the conflict between these opposing concepts works within each of the stories.

Source: Penguin Random House Canada (<http://penguinrandomhouse.ca/>)

**Other formats available at Halifax Public Libraries:**

- eBook