



Roost by Ali Bryan

About the author:

Ali Bryan is a personal trainer who grew up in Halifax and attended high school in Sackville, New Brunswick. She is a graduate of St. Mary's University and completed a graduate certificate in creative writing from the Humber School for Writers under the tutelage of Paul Quarrington. She was a finalist in the 2010 CBC Canada Writes literary contest for her essay "Asshole Homemaker" and a bronze medalist in the 2012 Canada Writes Literary Triathlon. Ali lives in Calgary with her husband and three children.

Source: Author's website (<http://www.alibryan.com/>)

About this book:

Winner of the 2014 Georges Bugnet Award for Fiction
Selected for One Book Nova Scotia 2014

Claudia, single mother of two young children, pines for her past independent life. Her ex, after all, has moved on to a new wardrobe, a new penchant for lattes—new adult friends. But in Claudia's house she's still finding bananas in the sock drawer, cigarettes taped to wrestling figures, and doodles on her MasterCard bills. Then Claudia receives the unexpected news that her mother has died.

As Claudia attempts to gain control of her life, she realizes that her fellow family members also struggle with uncertainty. Her brother's family appears picture perfect—the children always clean, the puzzles never missing pieces—but he and his wife hunger for a break from parenthood. Her father has joined a curling team

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and seems to be active in the community. Yet he orders product after as-seen-on-tv product for his own empty nest.

Shared through the hilarious, honest, and often poignant perspective of a single mother, *Roost* is the story of a woman learning about motherhood while grieving the loss of her own mother. And as she begins to mend, she's also learning that she might be able to accept her home—as it is.

Source: Publisher's website (<http://www.freehand-books.com/>)

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the significance of the title, *Roost*? Can you think of any alternative titles you might give this book?
2. How would you describe Ali Bryan's writing style in *Roost*? What effect does it have on you?
3. Claudia's ex-husband gives every impression of being a good father and an attentive friend to her. What do you think went wrong in their relationship?
4. Does Claudia grow or change by the end of the story? How have the events changed her?
5. Is there anything about Claudia that you admire, or that you disapprove of? Has she made you reflect on yourself as a parent?



6. In an interview Ali Bryan is quoted as saying “Humor has been an ally in my darkest moments.” How does this apply to Roost?
7. There are a number of mothers in this book (Claudia, Allison-Jean, Janice). What does Roost say about modern motherhood? Do you think it is a realistic portrayal of the experience of being a mother?
8. Claudia finds herself in a “sandwich generation” situation as she cares for her young children and her aging parents. How does this compare to your experience or the experiences of your friends and family.
9. Roost is set in Halifax and reflects the life a working single mother in the city. Do you think the experience is similar or different for single mothers in rural communities?
10. The death of Claudia’s mother at the book’s outset has a significant impact on everyone in the story and each person has a unique perspective on grief. How does Roost portray these different perspectives (children and adult, or daughters/sons/spouses, etc.)? Did you find this a realistic portrayal of the grief process?
11. Is the ending satisfying? If so why? If not, why not ... and how would you have changed it?
12. Roost is the third One Book Nova Scotia selection. Have you read the past selections? How is this book different from the previously selected books? What do you think makes a good community read book?
13. Would you recommend this book to other readers? To a close friend?

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Source: *One Book Nova Scotia* (<http://1bns.ca/>)

Other formats available at Halifax Public Libraries:

- eBook

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