

A LITTLE BIT MARRIED

DEBRA BORDEN

About This Guide

A Little Bit Married's main character, Bitsy Beberman Lerner, could be considered a study in contradiction by some readers, and a throwback or a pioneer by others, but she's anything but uninteresting! An unapologetic full-time wife and mother, Bitsy finds that the choices she's made haven't entirely been the ones to make her happy, and in the book we follow Bitsy's hilarious and poignant journey to self-discovery. The questions below are intended to assist your reading group's discussion of Debra Borden's funny and thought-provoking novel.

Questions for Discussion

1. What did you think of Bitsy at the beginning of the book? How did your opinion of her change as the novel progressed?
2. What do you think of Bitsy's long-held desire to forego a career and be a full-time wife and mother?
3. "Life in the suburbs is not all flower beds and carpools; there are rules." (page 33) What are some of the rules Bitsy is referring to? Do you agree that there is an unspoken code in society whether in the city, suburbs, or elsewhere?
4. What is your opinion of Alan? How do you think the story would have been different if Bitsy decided to stay with him when he regained his memory?
5. Discuss the various parent/child relationships in the book: The Winstons, Bitsy and her parents, Alan and his mother, Bebe and her children, the Rabinowitzes. What aspect of each made it a good or bad relationship? Why?
6. "But this was not the first time I'd subconsciously adopted Alan's view as my own. After so many years of marriage it was impossible to experience anything solely with my own antenna, and I often found myself registering Alan's opinion, even when he wasn't there." (page 11) Is this a common occurrence in marriage or long-term relationships? Why do you think this happens?
7. "There was an unspoken agreement in our home. The boys were smart and the girls were pleasant, and throughout my childhood we maintained that myth no matter how many A's I racked up or how many courses Eddie had to repeat over the summer or how many math tutors Mitch had to endure." (page 23) How do you think Bitsy's family's prevailing attitude affected her desire to be a full-time mom?
8. Bitsy resumes pottery as a way to gain control over her life, and at the beginning of chapter 25, she says of the hobby, "As the pottery begins to take shape, so do I." (page 209) What do you think she means by this line? How is pottery a metaphor for her life thus far, and in the future?

9. "Finally, my mother-in-law speaks. 'We've been discussing Alan's release,' she says, straightening herself, 'and he prefers to come home with me.'" (page 210) Did this turn of events surprise you, as well as Bitsy's reaction to the news?
10. How are Bebe and Bitsy's stories similar? What do they ultimately learn from each other?
11. Upon discovering that Alan has a mistress, Bitsy thinks to herself, "And, suddenly, I know. It just all falls apart, like a series of dominoes, one toppling over onto the other, all the pieces coming to rest on a most unbelievable truth. In that moment I am many things: wife, daughter-in-law, and also 'the last to know'". (page 266) Was this really an "unbelievable truth" for Bitsy? Do you think she might have figured this out earlier? If so, how?
12. What do you think of Alan's mother? Why do you think she helped Alan hide his affair? What is the reason for her dislike of Bitsy?
13. In describing her sublimated artistic talents, Bitsy says, "I knew that my love for paint, clay, and charcoal could only confuse me, divert me from the road to happiness. Certainly my mother had told me enough times to 'concentrate on finding the right man first. Get your life set—husband, kids. Then you can worry about what you like to do.'" Do you agree with Bitsy's mother's advice?
14. Do you have a talent or skill that you've left unused? What is it? Why don't you exercise it?
15. What does the book's title mean?