

## **'THE HOURS COUNT'**

### **READING GROUP GUIDE**

- 1.) After Millie first meets Ethel, she idealizes her life and marriage. How are Millie and Ethel different? Similar? How does their friendship play out in each other's lives?
- 2.) Does Millie's view of Ethel and this story change what you have thought or known about Ethel Rosenberg historically? What were your previous perceptions?
- 3.) Millie and Ethel both make their children their top priority. Compare their roles as mothers in the 1940s and 1950s to what motherhood is like today. Do you think Ethel and Millie are good mothers?
- 4.) Millie and Ethel are both women of their time. How do changing ideas of family, motherhood, birth control, autism, and psychology play roles in the novel?
- 5.) What do you think of Millie's relationship with her husband, Ed? Why does Millie stay with him even after their issues become clear?
- 6.) Near the end of the novel Millie must choose between Ed and Jake. Do you think Millie should have listened to Ed or trusted Jake? How would the novel have ended if Millie had chosen differently?
- 7.) How does the time period and the era of McCarthyism play a role in the novel? What about the setting of New York City in the 1950s and the difficulties that the Rosenbergs as well as Millie's family both faced?
- 8.) Who in the novel could be considered guilty and of what? Who is innocent? Does anyone get what he or she deserves in the end?
- 9.) The title, *The Hours Count*, comes from a Picasso quote about the Rosenbergs. How does it fit the story in this novel as well as the fictional character of Millie?
- 10.) Millie and Ethel are both Jewish. What role does religion play in the novel? Do you think it played a role historically in the Rosenbergs' execution? Why or why not?



