

Told to Be Small. Born to Be Boundless.

She Wasn't Supposed to Fly



BOOK CLUB
DISCUSSION GUIDE

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She Wasn't Supposed to Fly: Book Club Discussion Guide
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This complimentary discussion guide was created as a companion to *She Wasn't Supposed to Fly: Told to Be Small. Born to Be Boundless*.

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For more information about the book and author, visit www.stgriffon.com.

A Note to Readers



When I wrote *She Wasn't Supposed to Fly*, I was telling my story. What I didn't anticipate was how often readers would find pieces of their own stories within it.

Since the book was published, some of my favorite conversations have begun with a reader telling me what stayed with them after reading it. Sometimes it was a moment they recognized. Sometimes it was a question they had asked themselves. And sometimes something they read brought back an experience of their own.

Those conversations inspired this guide.

There are no right answers, and you don't need to discuss every question or work through them in order. Choose the ones that spark something in your group. Follow the conversation wherever it leads. Some questions may bring you back to moments in the book. Others may lead somewhere much closer to home.

Share as much or as little as you're comfortable sharing. Listen with curiosity. Leave room for different perspectives and experiences.

My story may have brought you together, but I hope the conversation gives each of you space to reflect on your own.

S. T. Griffon

Discussion Questions at a Glance



Section I: WHERE THE STORY MEETS YOU

- What moment, scene, or line stayed with you?
- What emotions did you experience while reading?
- What experience changed what you believed you were capable of?
- What part of Shonna's story connected with something in your own life?

Section II: THE STORIES WE LEARN TO CARRY

- Can something that helps us survive eventually begin to limit us?
- Which voices or opinions deserve influence over the choices you make?
- How do you know whether an expectation you carry is truly yours?
- What is the cost of conforming to others' expectations in order to fit in?

Section III: WHAT WE PROTECT, WHAT WE RISK

- How do you reconcile contradictory truths about someone you love?
- Do you find it easier to offer help than to receive it?
- How do you know when the cost of a sacrifice is too great?
- How do you move forward when you don't know how things will turn out?

Section IV: WHAT REMAINS

- What is true about you that can never be taken away?
- How would you describe yourself without your roles, accomplishments, or relationships?
- What advice would you give adolescent Shonna and adult Shonna?
- What differences do you see between the Shonna of Chapter One and the Shonna of the Epilogue?



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Section I:

WHERE THE STORY MEETS YOU



Some readers mentioned moments in the book that stayed with them.

Was there a moment, scene, or line in the book that stayed with you after you finished reading? What made that moment stand out?

NOTES

Readers have described experiencing a wide range of emotions while reading the book, sometimes directed at the people in it and sometimes at what was happening to Shonna.

What emotions did you experience as you read? Were there moments when your feelings surprised you?

NOTES

Airborne School became Shonna's first real proof that she could do something extraordinarily difficult on her own. That experience changed what she believed was possible for her life.

Was there an experience that changed what you believed you were capable of? How did it affect what you were willing to try next?

NOTES

Although the circumstances of our lives may be different, someone else's story can sometimes remind us of an experience, relationship, or part of ourselves we haven't thought about in a long time.

Did any part of Shonna's story remind you of something from your own life? What connection did you make?

NOTES

Section II:

THE STORIES WE LEARN TO CARRY



Early in the book, Shonna relies on achievement to escape a life she fears will trap her. Years later, after losing her job, she discovers that achievement has become her entire identity, purpose, and source of validation.

Can something we develop because it helps us survive or get through a difficult experience eventually begin to limit us? Can the same quality be both a strength and a burden?

NOTES

Throughout the book, Shonna encounters other people's ideas about what should be possible for her life but ultimately has to decide which voices deserve her attention.

How do you decide which voices or opinions deserve influence over the choices you make? Has there been a time when you had to trust your own judgment despite what others believed was best or possible for you?

NOTES

Throughout the book, Shonna encounters expectations about who she should be, what she should want, and what should be possible for her.

How do you know whether an expectation you carry for yourself is truly yours? Have you ever had to make that distinction? What did you discover?

NOTES

[illegible]

Throughout the book, Shonna finds herself in places where she has to navigate the difference between being her authentic self and fitting in.

Have you ever experienced the difference between comfortably being yourself and conforming to others' expectations in order to fit in? What was the cost of conforming?

NOTES

[illegible]

Section III:

WHAT WE PROTECT, WHAT WE RISK



Shonna's mother is one of the most complicated people in the book. At different times, she protects Shonna, supports her, limits her, and causes her pain. She wants her daughter to succeed, but often within the boundaries of what she believes Shonna's life should be.

Have you ever had to reconcile seemingly contradictory truths about someone you love?

NOTES

Shonna learned early in life that being vulnerable meant bad things could happen. After years of intentionally avoiding asking for help, her husband's deployment to war forced her to rely on others. Much to her surprise, bad things didn't happen.

Do you find it easier to offer help than to receive it? If so, why? If not, what has helped you become comfortable allowing others to help you?

NOTES

At different points in the book, Shonna makes sacrifices for people and things that matter deeply to her, often putting her own needs aside in the process.

Have you ever struggled to know when the cost of a sacrifice was too great? What, if anything, gave you the freedom to choose yourself?

NOTES

[illegible]

Shonna had to decide whether to risk leaving home to pursue a life of her own without knowing the outcome or stay and accept the reality she already knew.

Have you ever had to make an important decision without knowing how it would turn out? Were you able to move forward? What, if anything, gave you the courage to take the first step in spite of the uncertainty?

NOTES

[illegible]

Section IV:

WHAT REMAINS



One piece of advice Shonna receives is not to anchor happiness to anything that can be taken away.

Is that actually possible? What is something that's true about you that can never be taken away? Why?

NOTES

After Shonna lost her job, she struggled to describe who she was without relying on her titles, roles, and accomplishments.

If you were asked to describe yourself without using your job title, roles, accomplishments, or relationships, how would you respond to the prompt, "Tell me about yourself"?

If you're willing, give it a try.

NOTES

Across the book, adolescent Shonna and adult Shonna face very different circumstances, but both are trying to understand who they are and how to move forward.

If you could speak to Shonna at those two different points in her life, what advice would you give adolescent Shonna? What advice would you give adult Shonna? Would your advice to them be different? Why or why not?

NOTES

The Shonna we meet in the Epilogue is the same woman we first meet in Chapter One, immediately after losing her job. And yet, in many ways, she isn't.

What differences do you see between the Shonna of Chapter One and the Shonna of the Epilogue? What, if anything, do you think others can take from her journey as they navigate their own?

NOTES

Ask the Author

Did your discussion leave you with a question
you wish you could ask me?

Maybe there was a moment you wanted to know more
about, perhaps you want to know what happened after the
book ended, or simply a question that stayed with you.

I'd love to hear it.

From your desktop browser, visit

stgriffon.com/ask

You'll be directed to the Goodreads **Ask the Author** feature
on my profile page, where you can submit your question.

*Goodreads Ask the Author is currently
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I may respond to select questions on Goodreads, in future
conversations with readers, or during author events.

Thank you for sharing my journey!

S. T. Griffon ♥