



## The Time of Her Life

by Robb Forman Dew

### Reading Group Guide

1. The novel opens with a description of the weather in the town of Lunsbury, Missouri. Is this significant? What does the weather seem to indicate? Are there other scenes in the novel in which weather seems to play a large role?
2. Claudia Parks is a somewhat enigmatic figure. Do you think she is really as "nihilistic" as Avery implies? Are there in fact things that she cares about? Why do you think she is like this? And why do you think her life revolves so much around Avery?
3. Avery Parks, for all that he tries to distance himself from Claudia, resembles his wife in many ways. What do the house, the book he is writing, his drinking, and his departures tell us about him as a person? Why is he unable either to commit to Claudia completely or to leave her once and for all?
4. Are Avery and Claudia harder or less hard on each other than you think they should be? The word that a psychologist today might use to describe their relationship is *codependent*. Do you think Avery and Claudia should stay together and try to work things out, or would it be better for them to part ways for good?
5. Jane is a very precocious eleven-year-old, and she is an extraordinary and dedicated violin player. How does this factor into her relationship with her parents? How has Avery and Claudia's "regard" for their daughter affected her?
6. Do you think Jane feels anything amiss in her family or is it just normal to her? How does her admiration for Maggie Tunbridge and her friendship with Diana Tunbridge influence Jane's relationships at home, if at all?
7. What do you make of the novel's title? Do you think it might refer to more than one "time of her life"?
8. Even after the shocking and violent episode with the violin, Claudia and Avery don't seem to register the meaning of what they've done. What does the ending of the book signify to you? What do you think will happen in the next few months and years?
9. Does the Parks family remind you of any other fictional families? How is their situation better, or worse? How do the novel's specific settings and time periods affect both the life of the Parks family and your assessment of them?