

WHEN THE MOON TURNS BLUE

BOOK CLUB KIT

PAMELA TERRY



BALLANTINE
BOOKS



DEAR READER,

Southerners have a talent for telling stories. With seemingly little effort, they can amplify and elongate an ordinary trip to the grocery store into a tale of epic proportions. I know this because, as an only child growing up in the South, I learned how to listen. By the time I could talk, I'd discovered that the reward for staying quiet and out of the way in a room full of adults would be the hearing of some excellent stories. Grandiose and exaggerated, occasionally skating the outer boundaries of truth, the yarns a Southerner can spin are remarkable. Listen long enough, though, and you may begin to hear meaning running between and behind the words, you might start to understand the silent punctuation of nods and gestures, the poignancy of what's left unsaid. That is the true gift for the careful listener.

My stories usually begin with a scene I see clearly in my head. With *When the Moon Turns Blue*, I saw an ice storm bearing down on the little town of Wesleyan, Georgia while Marietta Cline sat in the front row at her husband's funeral, sick as a dog. After that, the other characters simply elbowed their way into the book, insistent on their chances to speak. Like the narrators I heard while I perched on the edge of a tapestry-covered sofa in the living room of one great aunt or another, each of the voices here is different, each perspective an individual one.

When I began to write this book, it was at a particularly noisy time in our culture. To do so from only one point of view seemed limiting; there were just too many voices demanding to be heard. So, I decided to let a lot of characters speak. Taken all together, I hope they paint a picture for the reader that is as entertaining and multi-faceted as a porch full of Southern storytellers on a Sunday afternoon. At the same time my wish for this story is that it might serve to remind us of how connected we are to each other. That is always my goal as a listener and my hope as a writer.

Thank you so much for reading, and I can't wait for you to meet the citizens of Wesleyan as they deal with problems none of them saw coming their way.



Warmly,
Pamela Terry





DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1. What did you think of the main characters in the novel: Butter, Glinda, Macon, and Marietta? How did your impressions of these characters change throughout the course of the story? Did you have a favorite?
 2. Discuss the significance of the title: *When the Moon Turns Blue*. What does it mean?
 3. *When the Moon Turns Blue* asks the question: “What happens when we discover that we don’t particularly like the people that we love?” How would you answer? Have you experienced this conflict in your life?
 4. In the novel, Pamela Terry observes that “We make the most important decisions of our lives when we’re least equipped to.” Do you agree? Why or why not?
 5. Did this novel make you re-examine your opinions about Confederate statues in the United States? Did you find yourself understanding both sides of the divided town, or were you firmly on one side?
 6. Discuss the setting. How did Terry bring this small town to life? How would the story be different if it was set in a larger city in the South?
 7. Compare this novel with recent news stories about controversial statues and historical landmarks in the United States. Do you think this fictional story was able to offer a more nuanced account?
 8. How does Terry use humor throughout the story, and for what purpose?
 9. How does *When the Moon Turns Blue* deal with grief and memory? What about legacy?
 10. Did anything in this novel surprise you? What will you take away from this reading experience?
 11. Do you feel differently about erecting a new statue than you do with removing one?
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SPICED HOT CHOCOLATE

INGREDIENTS

1 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
1 cup granulated sugar
2 tbsp. vanilla sugar
1 tbsp. ground cinnamon
½ tsp. freshly grated nutmeg
½ tsp. ancho chile powder
½ tsp. ground ginger
¼ tsp. ground cardamom

DIRECTIONS

1. Sift all ingredients together into a large bowl. Whisk the mixture together to be sure the spices are evenly distributed.
2. To serve, stir 3 tablespoons of the mix into 1½ cups (12 oz.) of hot milk. Serve in large mugs. Store the remaining mix in a tightly sealed jar.

Credit: foodnetwork.com/recipes/food-network-kitchen/spiced-hot-chocolate-3362655

