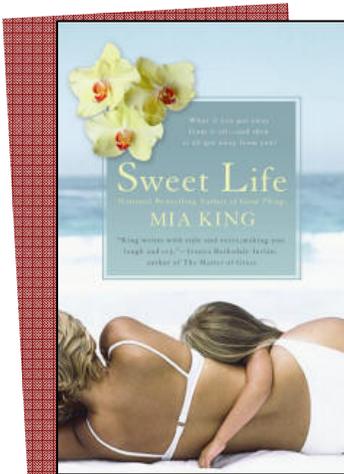


Sweet Life Reader's Guide



SUMMARY

When her husband, Paul, gets a new job, Marissa leaves her career and the island of Manhattan for the island of Hawaii. It seems like the perfect opportunity to save her marriage, regain her sense of self, and reconnect with her eight-year-old daughter, Pansy. But the family's new house is a fixer-upper at best, her daughter wants to be homeschooled, and what needs fixing the most—her marriage—is the first to crumble when Paul announces he wants some time apart to find himself. Pulled in opposite directions, Marissa is faced with the most important decision of her life—a choice that will define who she is, what she wants, and where her happiness lies.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. As a driven corporate executive, Marissa Price seems to have it made. Why do you think she agreed to move to Hawaii? Is it realistic that she would leave so much behind?
2. How do you feel about Marissa's husband, Paul? Does he honestly believe the move will be good for everyone, or just himself? Are men and women different in this way?
3. There's no doubt that Hawaii seems to be calling to them. Have you ever been in a situation where you felt it was destined? What did you do?
4. Pansy is an intelligent, precocious child that went with the flow in New York, which included having two absentee parents. Why does Pansy suddenly decide to voice her opinion regarding the move and her wish to be homeschooled?
5. Henry David Thoreau once said, "It is life near the bone where it is sweetest." How do our daily lives add or take away from experiencing the sweeter things in life?
6. How disconnected was Marissa to her family and herself while living in New York? Could she have experienced the same revelations if she had stayed in the city?

7. Marissa and Kavena seem like polar opposites. Why do their paths continued to cross? How is a friendship between two women who are so different possible? Do you have any close friendships with the unlikeliest of people?
8. Marissa takes an immediate dislike to Malia and feels an initial kinship with Angela. What does this tell us about ourselves and our perceptions of other women?
9. Marissa's new friends—Kavena, Jane and Malia—aren't anything like Kate. If the old saying, "birds of a feather flock together" is true, then how does this explain Marissa's simultaneous friendship with all these women?
10. In the first half of the book, every time Marissa attempts to see the lava flow, she fails. What is the symbolism in this and why, in the end, does she finally get her wish?
11. When Marissa returns to New York for Kate's wedding, Kate is distraught at the thought of Marissa and Paul getting a divorce. "I need to know that two people with issues can stay married!" Is it easier or harder to stay married these days? What's changed (or hasn't changed) from earlier generations?
12. Marissa's beliefs about parenting are constantly challenged throughout the book. How much of this is driven by her change in environment? Is a change of environment sometimes necessary to push us to consider other options? How do you react when someone parents differently from you or is strongly opinionated about what you do or do not do? Do you tend to listen and consider their point of view or are you pretty firm in your beliefs?
13. Tom appears in Marissa's life almost like a knight in shining armor, horse included. Why does she feel an attraction to him and what does this attraction say about her feelings for Paul?
14. Do you think Marissa and Paul have resolved the crisis in their marriage? Are you optimistic about their future? How do you think they've changed as individuals since their move to Hawaii?

ABOUT MIA KING

Mia King is lives with her family on the Big Island of Hawaii and is currently at work on her fourth novel. Her debut novel, *Good Things*, was a Writer's Digest Notable Debut and a national bestseller. Visit her website at www.miaking.com for hostess ideas, recipes, book excerpts and more.

