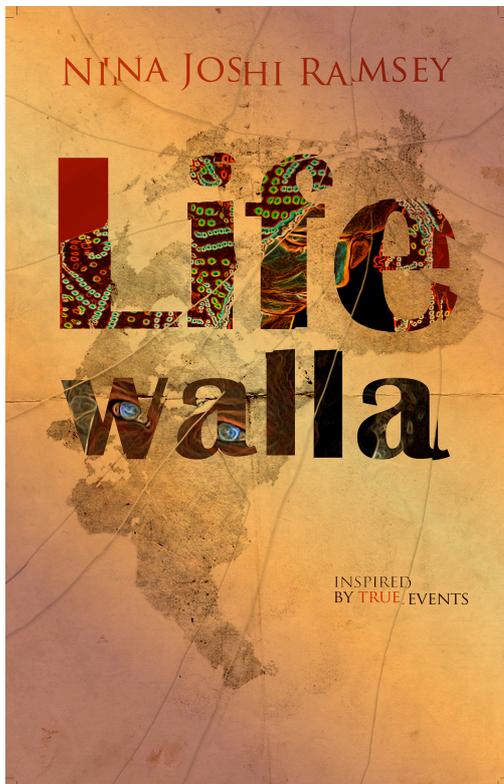


# Lifewalla

## Baker's Dozen Book Club Questions

Attributed to *LitLovers.com*



**About the book:** Set 30 years after a gas disaster claimed thousands of lives, travel to Jantapur into a survivor's experience of trauma, devastation, friendship, betrayal, and love alongside other characters that deal with life's pain in their own ways.

**Book Review:** Read a review for *Lifewalla* and [write your own!](#)

**About the Author:** *Lifewalla* is the debut novel of Nina Joshi Ramsey, who has also written in short story, short non-fiction and stage play form. [Find out more...](#)

- 1.** The book was **inspired** by real events. Why does it not name the city of the real events? Could the story relate to other trauma experiences? What current man-made or natural disasters might have survivor experiences? Could these have some similar characteristics to those in the book? Discuss the experience of loss, grief, shock, anger and powerlessness in the book. Do these also relate to current news events? Does any of this affect your perspective about the story? About survivors?
- 2.** How did you **experience** the book? Did you engage immediately with Dilkhush or did it take you a while? How did you feel as you read the story—intrigued, amused, saddened, disturbed, thrilled, confused...? Did you connect to different parts of the book and characters differently? How? Why do you think that was?
- 3.** Describe Dilkhush's **character**, personality and motivations. What are her inner qualities? How does her position represent women and widows in her culture, country and class? How would her experience have been different had she lived in your country or culture or class? Does this also apply to Dalya, Naseema Bi, and Omera? What do Sick Sikh and the old owl's girls provide in the

story?

**4.** What character traits in the book do you find yourself **reflecting** upon most?

- What is Dilkhush's reaction to those who have wronged her?
- Is Omera's reaction to Dilkhush justified? What are her real feelings about her life?
- Are there characters you most looked forward to? Why?
- Are the characters justified in their actions? Would you want them to do something different? Who and why?
- Who do you feel is(are) the absent character(s)? Why do you think that is? What do you feel they could have added? How does this relate to the real world?
- Do you feel the characters represent only themselves or do they personify universal aspects? If the latter, what does each represent?
- How has the past shaped each of the characters lives?
- Do they remind you of people you know? Do their emotions remind you of any experience you have had?
- Describe the dynamics between the old owl's girls and the people they come in contact with? How would they have been with the villain? With the Bilayatis family?
- Do you admire or disapprove of them? What do you think their place is in their culture?
- Why do some characters in the book get involved in the politics and legalities of the disaster and others don't? Which is the position you feel is most realistic? How does this relate to people in your country or culture or time?

**5.** How does Dilkhush's character **development** take place—from her journey as a girl in her Father's village, to the end of the book? How does her world work? Does she learn something different to what she had seen around her? What do you think happens to her afterwards? If she had lived in a different country or culture, or been a man, would her experience have been different? How?

**6.** Discuss the **plot** of Lifewalla:

- Before you read it, what did you think the book was about? Did it meet your expectations?
- Did you feel it brought up more than it resolved or did it resolve what you expected? Why do you think that was?
- Did you find it engaging, interesting? What did you enjoy most?
- Is this a plot-driven book—a fast-paced page-turner, or does the plot unfold slowly with a focus on character?
- Were you surprised by the complications, twists & turns, or did you find the plot predictable?

**7.** Explore **structure** of the story:

- Is Lifewalla a continuous story...or interlocking short stories or experiences?
- Does the time-line move forward chronologically?
- Or Does time shift back & forth from past to present?
- How does this affect the reader's understanding about characters?
- Is there a single viewpoint or shifting viewpoints?
- Why might Joshi Ramsey have chosen to tell the story the way she did?
- What difference does the structure make in the way you read or understand the book?

**8.** What main ideas—**themes**—does Joshi Ramsey explore?

Consider the title. Does everyone who has the gift of life have the same experience of life? Why is this the case? Do human rights apply selectively? And who decides on that? How does the author of Lifewalla use **symbols** to reinforce ideas? (See LitLovers.com's free LitCourses on both **Symbol** and **Theme**.)

**9.** What **passages** strike you as insightful, even profound? Perhaps a bit of dialog that's funny or poignant or that encapsulates a character? Maybe there's a particular comment that strikes you, or one states the book's thematic concerns? From the passages you highlight, which of those characters would you want to meet in real life, and why? What conversation would you have with them?

**10.** Is the **ending** satisfying for you? If so, why? If not, why not...and how would you change it? Would this reflect real life or what real life should be like? Is it important or not for this to be the case? Should books transcend real life or reflect it? Could any of those change the status quo?

**11.** If you could **ask the author** a question, what would you ask? Have you read or experienced other writing by the same author, in readings, stage plays, short stories? If so, how does this book compare. If not, does this book inspire you to read others?

**12.** Has reading Lifewalla **changed you**—broadened your perspective? Have you learned something new or been exposed to different ideas about people or a certain part of the world?