



READING GROUP GUIDE

HOW HIGH THE MOON

by Sandra Kring

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1. Teaspoon tells Mrs. Carlton the story of how she got her nickname fairly early in the book. As you read on and got to know her, did any other nicknames come to mind?
2. What was the effect of reading the novel through Teaspoon's eyes? What do you think would have been lost if Teddy had done the narrating?
3. On page 58, Brenda tells Teaspoon "I think you're about to learn that in this life, what we want to do is often the opposite of what we get to do." What does she mean by this? What is Brenda not able to do? What's stopping her?
4. Early on, Teaspoon works very hard to let everyone know that Charlie is her *neighbor*, not her *friend*, even though she quite obviously has come to care about him a great deal. By the end of the novel, Charlie is her *brother* in more ways than one. Is there anyone in your life with whom you had a similar experience?
5. Do you agree with Teaspoon when she says, "It sure is amazing how badly you want to do good after you've done something bad" (p. 74)?
6. What do you think motivates women like Gloria Bloom to put on airs, judge others, and gossip?
7. When Mrs. Bloom asks Brenda if Les Paul and Mary Ford have been booked for the gala, Brenda hesitates for only a minute before answering that they had. Why do you think she lied to her mother? Why not just tell the truth and face the consequences?
8. According to Teaspoon, "a lot of things changed after Dumbo Doug ran Charlie over. Mostly Brenda" (p. 183). What do you think it was about Charlie's accident, exactly, that caused this shift in Brenda?

9. At the end of Chapter Twenty-eight, Teaspoon tells Brenda that Johnny won't be coming to the gala because he's gone down south to work. Based on Brenda's next moves—telling Teaspoon she loves her just the way she is, etc.—would you say that this was the moment Brenda decided she couldn't go on? Or had she already made up her mind?
10. Teaspoon is presented with the difficult choice between staying with Teddy, who has always taken such good care of her, or hitting the road with Catty, who she idolizes. What do you think was behind her decision?
11. Catty Marlene is a very complicated character. But is she a bad mother? Do you think her second departure from Mill Town signified a new maturity, or was it just another selfish act?
12. What do you think happens to Johnny, Brenda and Daniel in the future? Brenda has become a teacher. What do you see for Johnny, career-wise?
13. It's amazing how certain people end up changing our lives so completely. Mrs. Carlton is responsible for Teaspoon having met Brenda. In turn, Brenda is responsible for many of the changes that occur in Teaspoon before the novel's close. Who are the Mrs. Carltons and Brendas in your life?
14. How do you think Teaspoon's story would have been different if *How High the Moon* took place in the present day instead of 1955?

ABOUT THIS BOOK

In this tender novel set in 1955 Mill Town, Wisconsin, Sandra Kring explores the complicated bond between mothers and daughters, the pressure to conform, and the meaning of friendship and family.

Ten-year-old Isabella “Teaspoon” Marlene has been a handful ever since her mother, Catty, dumped her with an old boyfriend and ran off to Hollywood. Teaspoon fights, fibs, never stops singing, and is as unpredictable and fearless as a puppy off its leash. Still, Teddy Favors, a man who has taken his share of kicks, is determined to raise her right.

Teaspoon wants to be better for Teddy—even if that means agreeing to take part in a do-gooder mentorship program and being paired up with Brenda Bloom, the beautiful reigning Sweetheart of Mill Town. Against all odds, as the summer passes, this unlikely duo discover a special friendship as they face personal challenges, determined to follow their hearts instead of convention.

It's while Brenda and Teaspoon are putting together the grandest show the Starlight Theater has ever seen that Catty returns to Mill Town, shattering illusions and testing loyalties. But by the final curtain call, one determined little girl shows an entire town the healing that can happen when you let your heart take center stage.



AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT

Sandra Kring lives in Wisconsin. Her debut novel, **Carry Me Home**, was a BookSense Notable Pick and a 2005 Midwest Booksellers' Choice Award nominee. **The Book of Bright Ideas** was a 2006 Target Bookmarked™ selection and was named to the New York Public Library's Books for the Teen Age list in 2007. Her third novel **Thank You for All Things** was a Midwest Connections Pick in 2008.

HOW HIGH THE MOON is a **Midwest Connections Pick** recommended by the independent booksellers of the Midwest Booksellers Association. Buy this book at your favorite locally owned and operated bookstore. You'll find a directory of our member stores at www.midwestbooksellers.org.