

The Women



About the Author

Kristin Hannah is an American author, whose bestselling works (*The Nightingale*, *The Great Alone*, etc.) have been published in more than 45 languages and have sold millions of copies worldwide. After graduating with a degree in communication from the University of Washington in 1983, Hannah worked at an advertising agency in Seattle. She graduated from the University of Puget Sound law school and practiced law in Seattle before becoming a full-time writer. Hannah wrote her first novel with her mother, who was dying of cancer at the time, but the book was never published. Hannah currently lives on Bainbridge Island, Washington with her husband and their son.

About the Book: (from Goodreads)

Women can be heroes. When twenty-year-old nursing student Frances “Frankie” McGrath hears these words, it is a revelation. Raised in the sun-drenched, idyllic world of Southern California and sheltered by her conservative parents, she has always prided herself on doing the right thing. But in 1965, the world is changing, and she suddenly dares to imagine a different future for herself. When her brother ships out to serve in Vietnam, she joins the Army Nurse Corps and follows his path.

As green and inexperienced as the men sent to Vietnam to fight, Frankie is over-whelmed by the chaos and destruction of war. Each day is a gamble of life and death, hope and betrayal; friendships run deep and can be shattered in an instant. In war, she meets—and becomes one of—the lucky, the brave, the broken, and the lost.

But war is just the beginning for Frankie and her veteran friends. The real battle lies in coming home to a changed and divided America, to angry protesters, and to a country that wants to forget Vietnam.

The Women is the story of one woman gone to war, but it shines a light on all women who put themselves in harm’s way and whose sacrifice and commitment to their country has too often been forgotten. A novel about deep friendships and bold patriotism, *The Women* is a richly drawn story with a memorable heroine whose idealism and courage under fire will come to define an era.

Suggested Reads:

- Absolution by Alice McDermott
- The Lotus Eaters by Tatjana Soli
- The Restless Wave by James Stavridis

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Discussion Questions

1. If you lived during the Vietnam War, what memories do you have of that era? How did it feel reading about that era? If you weren't born until later, how much knowledge did you have about the Vietnam War and the time period prior to reading the novel? How did your impression of the time period change after reading?
2. Do you feel you learned something new by reading 'The Women'? What did you learn?
3. What are your thoughts about Frankie, as the protagonist? What do you think of her growth journey from the beginning of the novel to the end?
4. Why did she decide to serve as a nurse during the war? What was she hoping to achieve?
5. How did her brother's death in Vietnam impact both Frankie and her family?
6. As soon as Frankie arrives in Vietnam, she learns the war is very different than what's presented to the American public. What were your thoughts on this contrast, particularly as you read the hospital scenes?
7. Frankie develops a close friendship with her fellow nurses. What did you think about the author's depictions of bonds during war experiences?
8. What are your thoughts on the romances in this story, with Jamie and Rye? Why does it seem that infidelity was common during the war?
9. Why did Frankie decide to extend her time in Vietnam instead of coming back home?
10. After Frankie's return home, what are your thoughts on the treatment she received?
11. What did you think of the author's depiction of Frankie's experience with PTSD?
12. What did you learn about women's involvement in the war? Was 'The Women' a fitting title?