

Reading Guide

It Might Have Been—And Other Short Stories

2nd Edition

Secondary

- 1** A short story focuses on a main conflict in an intense way, allowing the drama to play out in very few scenes. Can it have as much impact as a full length novel despite being so much shorter?
- 2** Often times, short stories do not spend much time describing the environment, yet a sense of place needs to exist. Did any of these stories develop a setting particularly well? How did it happen when there wasn't a lot of description?
- 3** Did any of the characters in these stories feel familiar to you? How? Was it the character that felt familiar or the crisis he or she was dealing with?
- 4** Short stories offer a “slice of life,” leaving the reader to imagine what might happen next. Was there a story you could imagine continuing in your own imagination?
- 5** Were there any character interactions that seemed real to you? If you were to write a scene between two characters what kind of relationship would they have—romantic, siblings, parent to child, friends, strangers?

Adult/Book Clubs

- 1** Which story sticks with you? What part of it resonated or clashed with you personally?
- 2** Generally there is a resolution to each story, but not always a “happy ending.” Do the stories still feel complete? Is there a story you wish had ended differently? How might you have ended it?
- 3** Is there a character in the story that you recognize? Anyone seem so familiar you could see his or her face? Who and what is the personal connection?
- 4** Did any of the stories help you see a new perspective? Whose?
- 5** What setting grabbed your attention? Was that because it was familiar or so different from familiar settings? Would you like to visit that place?

Paperback/Journal Reflections

1 Which story(ies) did I react to emotionally? Why? What feelings did they stir up? Why might that be?

2 Did I wish for a different ending to any of the stories? Why one? How would I have ended it? Why does it need a different ending?

3 What characters did I admire or feel attracted to? Do I wish there were more stories with these characters? What is the attraction? Do I have people in my life that fill these roles for me or am I missing these kinds of relationships?

4 What characters made me angry or simply ticked me off? Why? Do they remind me of anyone in particular? How do I deal with this kind of person in real life? If I were writing the story, what would happen to these characters?

5 Were there any details that jumped out at me? Settings? Scents, tactile experiences, images, sounds? Do I naturally resonate with these things or are they missing pieces in my life that I long to fill, perhaps with the time and peace of mind to notice them in the real world?