

MARIA

— DISCUSSION QUESTIONS —

1. Had you seen *The Sound of Music* before reading *Maria*? How did your prior knowledge of the musical impact your reading experience?
2. What differences between the real Maria von Trapp and the Maria in the movie most surprise you?
3. Maria's journey begins with her wanting to lead a quiet life as a nun. How does her journey to becoming a mother and eventually an entertainment icon challenge her faith and perspective on life?
4. Maria's life is changed by several men, from Georg von Trapp to Oscar Hammerstein. How are they initially portrayed in the novel—and how do they evolve? How do they contribute to Maria's growth as a character?
5. The book centers around the creation of *The Sound of Music* but also speaks to the real events of Maria's life that were changed in the musical and movie. Why do you think the writers changed Maria's life in the ways that they did? Do you think if the musical were written today, the changes they'd make might be different?
6. Explore the notion of artistic integrity in *Maria*. What does it mean to own one's voice and story? What are the risks and rewards of being a celebrity?
7. In Maria's conversations with Fran, we learn that some of Maria's children no longer speak to her. Later in life, do you think Maria regretted her somewhat demanding temperament as a parent?
8. If you had the chance to ask Michelle Moran one question about *Maria*—about the writing process, the characters, or the plot—what would it be?