



#1 *New York Times* bestselling author of
UNDER THE TUSCAN SUN

**FRANCES
MAYES**

A Novel

**A GREAT
MARRIAGE**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *A Great Marriage* explores many poignant themes, including friendship, self-discovery, heartbreak, embracing change, forgiveness, and romantic relationships. Which theme resonated the most deeply with you and why?
2. Charlotte's psychology books strike out against the usual wisdom that marriage is always a compromise. She calls that "dreary." How does she define a good marriage? A great marriage? Or one that falls into her never-to-late for a good divorce?
3. Austin and Dara go through different journeys when they decide to separate. How do Austin and Dara's paths differ? How do their individual journeys reflect their personalities and values?
4. Redbud, the family home, and the river flowing at the end of the meadow are recurrent throughout the novel. How do they contribute to the story? What roles do other locales play?
5. Can you have a great marriage, as defined in Charlotte's terms?
6. How would you describe Dara's character? Austin's?
7. What do you think Charlotte means by "most marriages fail through lack of imagination"?
8. Discuss the roles of mothers in the novel—Shelley's mother, Dara's mother, Lee's mother, Rich's mother, Austin's mother—all are crucial in different ways.
9. Dara and Austin's friends, especially Mei and Amit, all have their own subplots. How do their plans and participation work in the novel?
10. How does the character of Shelley evolve, or does it?
11. What did you think of the book's ending? What lessons did this story teach you?