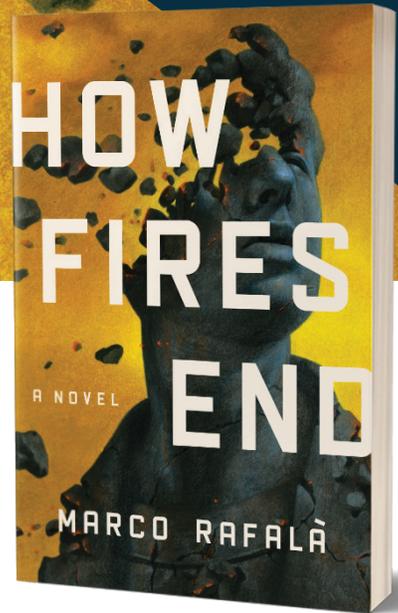


HOW FIRES END BOOK CLUB GUIDE



Suggested Discussion Questions

1. The book takes on a non-traditional structure, starting with the present before going into the past. Did you like this approach? As the Vassallo family's past unspooled, how did it change the way you felt about the characters?
2. A theme throughout the story is immigration and the struggle to straddle two cultures. How does this relate to your own life experiences or experiences of friends, family, or neighbors?
3. David's fate in the first half of the book can be shocking. How did you feel about this? How did it affect your reading experience going into Salvatore's section of the novel?
4. What did you think about Nella's role in the book? How did she surprise you? And how did you feel about the part she played in the telling of the story? What more would you have been interested in seeing from or about her?
5. Another theme is the cost of keeping secrets. What surprised you about not just the costs but also the resolution that Nella finds? Do you think Nella's actions will change the course of the Morello family?
6. The author, Marco Rafalà, has shared that some of the events in the book were inspired by his family's own experiences in Sicily during the Second World War. How does that change your perception of the book?
7. Italy had a complicated and troubling role in the Second World War. Is the perspective of Italian civilians during the war—and how that trauma reverberates across generations—one you've seen before? How does it change your view of that period in history?
8. Food plays a major role in this book. What role does food play in your own life? And how hungry were you reading this novel?

RECIPE:

NELLA'S ALMOND CAKE

Ingredients

3 cups finely ground almond flour
2 ½ teaspoons baking powder
8 large eggs
1 ½ cups olive oil
1 ½ tablespoons almond extract
1 tablespoon vanilla extract
¾ cup honey
Zest of one large orange
¼ cup or more slivered almonds



Directions

1. Preheat oven to 325F.
2. Grease a cake or other pan and/or line with parchment paper.
3. In a large mixing bowl, combine almond flour and baking powder.
4. In a separate container, beat raw eggs, then add olive oil, almond extract, and vanilla extract.
5. Stir liquid ingredients into dry ingredients, working carefully to remove any clumps.
6. Add honey and orange zest to batter and continue stirring well.
7. Pour batter into prepared pan and top with slivered almonds as desired.
8. Cook for 35-50 minutes until a knife inserted into center of cake comes out clean. The cake crust may get a bit dark, but this is normal (and delicious). If the cake is taking too long to cook, oven temp can be increased to 350F. If the cake crust burns too early, oven temp can be reduced and cooking time increased.
9. Remove from oven and let cool. Can be eaten warm or cold.