




BOOK CLUB KIT



 @AndreaUptmor
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Dear Reader,

It is my absolute joy to share with you this advance copy of Andrea Uptmor's debut novel, *The New People*, releasing on July 21st. I'm taking a lot of care in how I describe this book, which has one of the most heart stopping—and heart-affirming—set ups I've read in years: in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, a newly married lesbian couple move into a flipped foreclosure, unaware that the former homeowners are still living in the attic. While the premise is certainly a pressure-cooker, the novel that follows strikes a pitch perfect balance between unease and a genuine tenderness towards its characters.

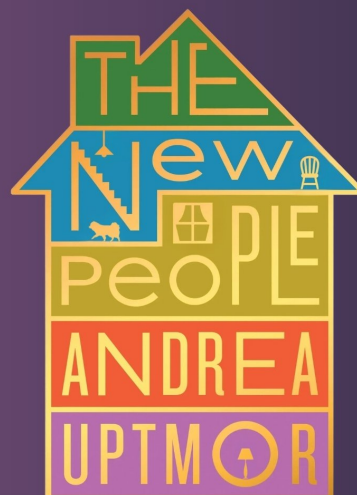
In the opening pages, we meet Emma, who has just moved with her wife, Rachel, to a small conservative college town in Indiana, looking for a fresh start after a painful miscarriage. As Rachel immerses herself in her role as a tenure-track professor and bestselling novelist, Emma struggles to find community in Riverbend, convinced that the town is set against her. Her only refuge is in their new home, until strange occurrences make her question whether she and Rachel are truly alone. They aren't.

Unbeknownst to them, Charlotte and Dirk, the former homeowners, have been squatting in the secret attic above the garage. Financially ruined and anxious about her husband's declining health, Charlotte is convinced that the only way to maintain their tenuous tie to their estranged son is if they stay put. Better yet, if she can drive the new people out of their house, then maybe she and Dirk can return to how things were. But as Emma and Charlotte's paths are put on a collision course, both soon find that they are at risk of losing—or gaining—everything.

Despite the 2008 setting, *The New People* feels entirely too apt for our present moment, where headlines about economic anxiety and community polarization dominate our daily lives. Bruce Holsinger, author of the Oprah's Book Club selection, *Culpability*, puts it best: "Andrea Uptmor has written the novel of the affordability crisis." Yet, beyond being a searing look at the fragile nature of home and security, *The New People* is first and foremost an intimate portrayal of the ties that bind people together, and the lengths we will go to reclaim what we've lost. It has given me hope, even in these most tumultuous of times, and it is my honor to share it with you now. I hope you love it just as I do.

Best wishes,

Gabriella Mongelli
Senior Editor
Little, Brown and Company



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Nearly everyone in *The New People* is hiding something. Were any of these secrets, in your view, acceptable? Are there characters you think should have been honest sooner?
2. If you were in Charlotte's position, would you have sabotaged the house as she does, or taken another path? What could she have done instead?
3. How do you think Rachel's literary success affected Emma? Do you think *Give Me Five Moons* would have been the wedge to drive them apart if Emma's pregnancy had not?
4. What does Charlotte's decision to keep Dirk uninformed about the lawyers she contacted reveal about the state of their marriage?
5. Given everything that has passed between them, why do you think Emma is able to forgive Charlotte? How might Emma's pregnancy, which coincides with Charlotte's loss of Justin, play into that forgiveness?
6. In many small-town narratives that address LGBTQ+ themes, religion often plays a role in some way, yet here it is noticeably absent as a theme. Why do you think that is? What does this say about the community of Riverbend?
7. On page 12, Rachel says, "Also, it's 2008. We've got a Black guy running for president. We're two ladies who are married! This is an entirely new world compared to when we were kids." How do you feel reading this decades later? Do you agree or disagree with Rachel's optimistic outlook on the political climate of the time?
8. Alex and Patty are both portraits of incredibly complex characters. How did your understanding of them change throughout the course of the novel? Were there moments you disagreed with them? Sympathized or agreed with them?
9. Foreclosure, the instability of adjunct teaching, and debt all appear alongside the financial burden of IVF and the trauma of miscarriages. Talk about the ways in which these various kinds of loss and precarity connect one another. What are some other ways in which these characters encounter forms of security, or the lack thereof?
10. How do you think the behaviors of the men on the periphery of the book affect the women's narratives around them? For example, what are the ripple effects from Paulie and Victor's behavior on Emma and Charlotte's lives?
11. On page 249, Rachel says, "Not everyone's meant to be a mother. And that's not a bad thing." In what ways do Emma's reactions to that statement reflect the larger arc of her journey in the novel? How does Emma's journey to motherhood relate to Charlotte's?
12. Characters in this novel repeatedly lose things they once assumed they owned or had control over — homes, careers, marriages, even their own bodies. Which type of loss would be hardest for you, personally? Which struck you as the most devastating in the story? More so, if we view this novel as a story about loss, what message do you think the author is trying to get across?



THE NEW PEOPLE PLAYLIST

The soundtrack of America at the edge of collapse: indie-folk dreams, housing-bubble excess, and the songs that filled radios and college towns in the months surrounding the 2008 financial crisis. As Emma, Rachel, Charlotte, and Dirk wrestle with personal loss and the futures they imagined, this playlist captures both the optimism and the unraveling of the era.

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