

CHRISTINE LEMMON

READING GROUP GUIDE

Sand in My Eyes Guide

- 1. Living a life one loves.** According to the prologue, there is nothing a mother longs to hear more than her grown daughter living a life she loves. Do mothers hear this today or do they often hear something different from their daughters? The older Anna was worried whether she had taught her daughter “how to soar through life, so her journey is not all demanding, but breathtakingly beautiful, too.” Is this something mothers can teach their daughters? If so, in what ways?
- 2. Phases of Life.** What stages of life does Anna go through? Do all mothers go through different sorrowful stages of transition? What helps them through these potential turning points?
- 3. Challenges of Motherhood.** In the first chapters of the book, does Lemmon exaggerate how hard motherhood can be, or have you at times felt the way she describes? Fedelina says she has no secret to make motherhood easier. Have you heard of anything to make it easier? Do you know of any secrets?
- 4. The Fiery Forest.** Anna makes frequent references to a fiery forest in her mind. What might this fiery forest represent? Have you found anything to help you from worrying at night? What suggestions do you have for people who lie awake at night fearing and thinking negative thoughts?
- 5. One Week to Yourself.** Young Anna gets a whole week to herself. Suppose you’re in the “stage of life” that Anna is in—bombarded by housework and small children. Then you’re granted one week all to yourself in your home. How would you want to spend it? Realistically, how would you spend it? How did Anna’s husband want her spending the week? How did she really spend it? Is the want for such time alone realistic? Why do women feel guilty once they get it?
- 6. Dreams on the Back-Burner.** Anna thinks of “all the things a mother does in a day—things she doesn’t want to do but must—and walked over to my writing desk instead. It wasn’t that I did writing at the desk—I didn’t have time—but it was a writing desk nonetheless and when I cleared the clutter, a desire to create flooded my mind, and as I dusted the deep mahogany with my finger, I felt an urge from within compelling me to start.” What is something you wish you could fit into your life everyday? Why are you not doing it now? At what age do you feel you will finally start it?
- 7. Sharing Problems.** The first time her neighbor knocks at her door, Anna quickly changes the mask she is wearing on her face from miserable woman whose life is in disarray to ‘my life is astounding.’ Anna doesn’t want to “be one of those women who verbally dump her overwhelmed side on others and, besides, it’s simpler to pretend that all is fine.” Talking about problems is a healthy thing to do; however, is there a difference between talking to friends about problems and becoming a draining person?
- 8. Routines & Regrets.** When Anna was a publicist, she had fallen into routines she had disliked. What radical steps did she take to try to change her routines? In what ways is radical change possible? To what degrees? Was Anna’s change extreme? Is it worth making extreme changes when we are unhappy with our lives, or is it risky or irresponsible? Do you agree with Liam when he says, “It’s your life! You can never take it too seriously. Most people don’t take it seriously enough. They go about never questioning discontentment. They live with it like the color of their eyes, something they can’t change. Me? I can’t do that, Anna, I expect more from life. Call me a revolutionary, but if there’s something I hate about my life, you better believe I’m going to set out to make radical changes.”?

9. Unhappiness. What are Anna's, Fedelina's, and Liam's views of happiness? Do you think any of them are truly happy at any point in the novel? Do you know people who are truly happy? Without naming, do you know people who constantly crab?

10. Too Beautiful a World. Do you agree with Anna or with Fedelina that there is any such thing as a mother creating too beautiful a world for her children?

11. The Ending. What was your reaction to the ending? Of course you didn't expect it, but were you upset with the ending or did you appreciate its intent?