



## *Fill the Sky Discussion Guide*

### **Questions about the Book**

*(some mild spoilers, so read the book first!)*

1. Of the three friends in the book, which one do you relate to the most? Which one do you think you'd be most likely to be friends with? Why?
2. Given the state of her health when the novel opens, do you think Ellie is being resourceful or reckless in choosing to go to Ecuador?
3. Do you think Ellie survives?
4. The book opens with the Einstein quote "Look deep, deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better." How did nature help these characters understand themselves better? Were there particular elements of nature that you found particularly significant?
5. What do you think of the method of Parker's proposal? It is characterized differently by each of the three friends as: "smart," "bold," and "cowardly." What do you think?
6. Before Ellie's ultimate epiphany, did you think Ellie should tell David about Gavin? Why or why not?
7. Joline is both friend and sister-in-law to Ellie. Which did you think Joline felt the weight of more in dealing with Ellie's infidelity?
8. How was Chi-Chi important to the story and Tess's personal journey?
9. In Mama Rosita's ceremony with Bryce, she uses her foreknowledge of his yellow dock to manipulate the situation. What do you think of that?
10. On their last night in Ecuador, Marco tells Tess that Mama Rosita had a vision of "one more rock" that she worked to dislodge from Ellie's "river." What do you think that rock represents?
11. What is the key lesson each woman learns about herself over the course of the week? Who changes the most?

12. Near the end, Tess tells Marco, "Maybe loving someone is enough. And letting them love you back. Maybe that's all we should need." Do you agree?
13. All three women are in their mid-forties at the time of the story. Do you think being in their middle years had any particular impact on their experience in Ecuador?

Please send me any questions you generate within your group that we can add to this guide. I'd love to have this list be a dynamic one that is improved and expanded by those who read and talk about the book and its themes!

## Beyond the Book

### Questions about the Reader(s)

1. If someone close to you were in Ellie's situation and wanted to go to a foreign country to work with shamans, what would you be supportive of that idea? Would you go with them if they asked you to?
2. The three characters have differing perspectives on the value of marriage and commitment, even fidelity. What do you think?
3. If you had to pick one of the ceremonies described in the book to experience, which would it be? If you had to pick one that you would never do, which would it be? Why?
4. Have you ever tried alternative healing of any kind? After reading this book, would you be more or less likely to consider it? Why?
5. Have you ever gone on a women-only or men-only friends trip to a special destination? What was the impetus? How did it go? What kind of changes or insights were generated? How did the setting facilitate them?
6. Is there a destination high on your list for such a gathering? Where is it? What would you hope to gain from such a trip?

I am working to collect a list of destinations that have worked well for groups, or are places of interest to go in the future. I'd love to hear your thoughts on that!

