

Paper Moon

by Marion Husband

A READING GUIDE

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SUMMARY

The love affair between Spitfire pilot Bobby Harris and photographer's model Nina Tate lasts through the turmoil of World War II, but is tested when his plane is shot down. Disfigured and wanting to hide from the world, Bobby retreats from Bohemian Soho to the empty house his grandfather has left him, a house haunted by the secrets of Bobby's childhood, where the mysteries of his past are gradually unravelled and he discovers that love is more than skin deep. Following on from *The Boy I Love*, Marion Husband's highly acclaimed debut novel, *Paper Moon* explores the complexities of love and loyalty against a backdrop of a world transformed by war.

EXTRACT from Paper Moon

“In Parkwood Bobby covered his face with his hands, all the shame he’d felt then as terrible as ever. He remembered how much he wanted to make himself invisible as he waited for the taxi, how he’d slunk in the corner furthest away from the curious looks of the receptionist.... He lit another cigarette, catching sight of his father’s picture on the mantelpiece. Lieutenant Paul Harris wore a uniform exactly like Palmer’s. Reaching for the photo he studied his features carefully. Everyone used to say how alike they were and he knew that it was one of the reasons his stepfather hated him: he was a living, breathing reminder of his mother’s shotgun wedding that had ended so ignominiously and made such titillating gossip for his stepfather’s new neighbours....

“Bobby placed the photograph down on his knee. For a long time he gazed at his father’s face. For the first time in his life he missed him so badly; it was like a new, surprising grief and he drew breath at the sudden, extraordinary depth of pain. Holding the photograph to his chest, he bowed his head and wept.”

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Marion Husband graduated with distinction from the MA in Creative Writing at Northumbria University in 2003 and won the first Andrea Badenoch Prize for Fiction in 2005 for *Paper Moon*. Her first novel, *The Boy I Love*, was published in July 2005 and was followed by *Paper Moon*, *Say You Love Me* and most recently *The Good Father*. Marion is 45, married with two children and lives in the Tees Valley in the North East of England. She also teaches creative writing through the Open College.



FOR DISCUSSION

- From a young age Bobby is positioned as an outsider by his own family, bullied by his stepfather and banished to boarding school. How does this treatment affect Bobby's adult behaviour and relationships?
- Does Bobby's dedication to Nina stem from love of her or his desire to be needed by someone?
- Does the abuse perpetrated by Vickers or the resulting enforced estrangement from his home life and best friend have a greater affect on Bobby?
- Is Bobby's evident beauty the cause of many of his problems including his inability to connect with others and does his disfigurement help rather than hinder his route to contentment?
- Was Paul's abandonment of Bobby a selfish act or was it necessary at the time? Was the grandfather's decision to pretend Paul was dead justified?
- The reader knows little of Nina's background, is she a sympathetic character?

OTHER BOOKS BY MARION HUSBAND

The Boy I Love (June 2005) ISBN 978-1905170005 £6.99
Paper Moon (March 2006) ISBN 978-1905170142 £6.99
Say You Love Me (Jan 2007) ISBN 9781905170869 £7.99
The Good Father (October 2007) ISBN 9781906125035 £7.99

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