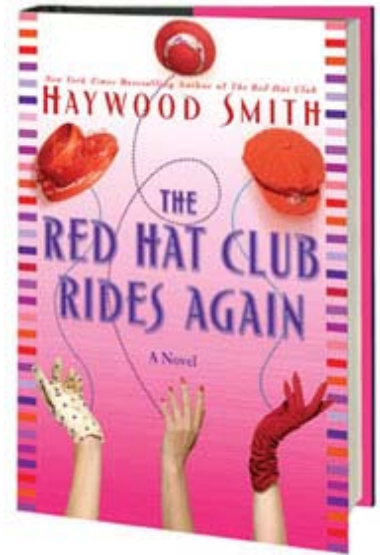


READING GROUP GUIDE

The Red Hat Club Rides Again by Haywood Smith



St. Martin's Press

ISBN: 0-312-31691-7 (hardcover)

Introduction to *The Red Hat Club Rides Again*

Put on your red hats and plenty of attitude, and spend a hilarious, heartwarming read with five fabulous women. . . .

The Red Hat Club is back, in rare form. When Pru Bonner, black sheep of the group, falls off the wagon so hard it shakes Diane, Linda, SuSu, Teeny, and Georgia's world, "the girls" stage a hilarious kidnapping in Vegas to help their childhood friend clean up her act.

As the women confront their pasts along with their hazardous adventure, they discover surprising strength in themselves and their friendships. Laughter is spiced with secrets, surprises, and pitfalls aplenty, including a midlife pregnancy test, a fight for life, the perils of Internet dating, an all-expense-paid plastic surgery cruise, and a surprise celebration that proves it's never too late for love.

As in *The Red Hat Club*, these irrepressible heroines face the challenges of friendship in sickness and in health, with heart and indomitable humor. So join the Red Hat Club and remember that age is all in your head, calories should always be in chewable form (Diet Coke with chocolate éclairs!), and that when all else fails, your Red Hat Club will see you through.

(This novel has not been authorized or endorsed by the Red Hat Society.)

Praise for *The Red Hat Club Rides Again*

" An engaging ode to the lasting bonds of southern sisterhood and life-begins-at-50 optimism."
- *Kirkus Reviews*

“[I]t’s hard to keep good women down, as *The Red Hat Club*’s bestseller status proves.”
- *Publishers Weekly*

A Note From Haywood

Dear Readers:

Consider having your book club meeting as a Red Hat celebration, with lots of purple and red, even if you're not fifty yet. Be ready to act silly and have a ton of fun. As always, I'd love to hear from your book group. Please feel free to email me at haywood100@aol.com with any additional questions, suggestions, or anecdotes. Or visit my web site at www.haywoodsmith.net.

Haywood Smith

(Yes, it's really my name. I figure, God knows
I wrote my books, so everybody else might as well.)

Reading Group Guide Questions

1. The fifth Sacred Red Hat Club Tradition prohibits butting in and trying to fix each other. How do you feel about the Red Hatters' going after Pru? Were their actions justified?
2. What do you think about Georgia's reaction at the slot machine after playing that fateful coin? Put yourself in her place and discuss what you might have done.
3. (*I don't drink, but this question is best answered with wine or margaritas.*) How did you feel about Georgia's forays into adult toy stores and her reasons for going?
4. Is there anyone in your life who could benefit from an intervention? If so, keep the names to yourselves, but discuss how, based on the Twelve Sacred Traditions, you might stage your own intervention. (*"Lighten up" is a great AA expression, so you can be as wild and funny as you like.*)
5. Each of the absolutely fictional Red Hat Club members represents an archetypal composite of women facing midlife challenges. Which character do you relate to most, and why? The least, and why? Without naming names, do you know anyone like each of the characters? (If so, I'd love to hear from you at haywood100@aol.com with specifics.)
6. How do you feel about Linda's reaction to her "pregnancy" and subsequent revelation? How would you react?
7. (*Another wine / margarita question*) Personally, I think every woman should be putting away money for a lift or liposuction in her sugar jar. I certainly am. Would you ever consider plastic surgery?
 - a. If so, what procedures would you like to have?
 - b. If not, what if someone offered it to you for free?

- c. If you've already had it and kept it a secret, would you be willing to "come out of the closet" with your friends? And do you honestly believe they don't already know? (Have another glass of wine before you answer.)
8. In the end, what chances do you see for happiness for each of the characters, and why?

About the Author

Baby-boomer **Haywood Smith** (born Anne Haywood Pritchett) grew up as one of five children in North Atlanta, Georgia. Inspired by Jenny Joseph's free-spirited poem "Warning," Haywood writes lighthearted coming-of-middle-age tributes to the Jilted Generation of women who, like she, have emerged victorious through divorce, teenaged children, menopause, the Internet, tennis elbow, spreading waistlines, nothing but tacky clothes in the stores, and countless other modern tribulations.