

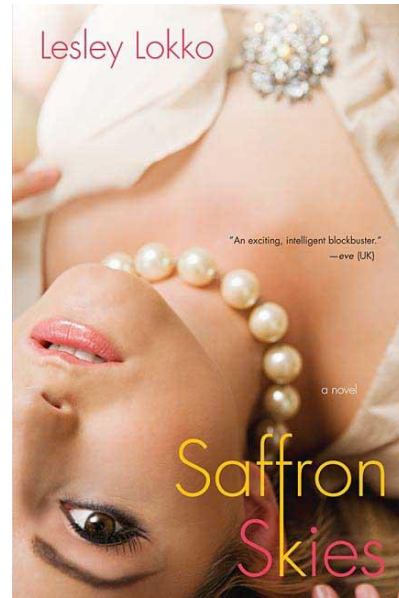
# READING GROUP GUIDE

## Saffron Skies

By Lesley Lokko

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### About this Guide

The following author biography and list of questions about *Saffron Skies* are intended as resources to aid individual readers and book groups who would like to learn more about the author and this book. We hope that this guide will provide you a starting place for discussion, and suggest a variety of perspectives from which you might approach *Saffron Skies*.

### About the Book

**A glittering saga of family, love, and grief from Lesley Lokko, an outstanding new voice in women's fiction**

In this sweeping family saga, Amber Sall has had the world given to her--everything a girl could ever want. She has a handsome powerbroker father, an older brother she adores, scads of money, and two best friends, Becky and Madeline. Through the decades, she and Becky and Madeline need each other through the best and the worst that women can experience, but can their friendship survive?

Max Sall, Amber's father, was a distant, self-made man, whose lust for power came from his tragic childhood. He drove Amber's society mother to alcoholism by openly keeping a mistress in Rome. His illegitimate Italian daughter, Paola Rossi, is spoiled beyond belief by her mother. She grows up to be a beautiful, glamorous member of the international jet set, yet still envious of everything Amber has, and determined to do what her mother never could: get a man to marry her. But when Paola finally gets married, the result is more disastrous than she ever could have dreamed.

*Saffron Skies* is an unforgettable story of wealth, ambition, family, friendship, passion, loyalty and betrayal.



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## About the Author

Lesley Lokko was born in Scotland of mixed Ghanaian-Scots parentage. She divides her time between Ghana and the UK.

## Discussion Questions

1. Although Max Sall is not a central character, he acts as a catalyst for much of the action. How does he shape the course of the narrative? How does his presence in the book mirror his presence in his family's life? Do you think he is aware of how his actions affect others?
2. Do you think Becky's envy of Amber was justified? How did her "normal" middle-class upbringing make her feel different from Amber and Madeline? Do you think she's now comfortable being her own person?
3. *Saffron Skies* looks at the themes of wealth and class. How does each girl's situation affect her attitude and outlook on life? How does it ultimately contribute to her successes and failures?
4. How did Francesca's actions and attitudes shape her daughter's values? Do you think this was ultimately damaging to Paola?
5. Paola and Amber are at odds until the very end of the book. Why do you think their relationship improves when Amber asked Paola for help?
6. The book focuses on relationships between families, friends, and lovers. What bonds prove to be the strongest in this story? Why do you think this is?
7. Why do you think Lokko chose to use the first person? How does this affect the mood and tone of her storytelling?
8. How do the female characters use their sexuality as leverage? Do you see it as an advantage or disadvantage? Why?
9. Some sections of the novel are set in world capitols like London, New York, and Rome, and some in postcolonial Africa and war-torn Bosnia. To what degree are the locations "characters" in the book? How do they shape the lives of the characters?

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