



Book Club in a Bag

Discussion Questions

If I Knew Then by Jann Arden

1. From the first line in the memoir: “I don’t think I became a person – meaning a somewhat capable, self-conscious, empathetic, thoughtful, kind and relatively intelligent human being – until I was forty-five years old”. Would you agree with the author? Why or why not?
2. The author had a very troubled relationship with her father. Do you think this relationship was instrumental in creating her artistic talents?
3. “I always felt I needed to do what other people thought I should be doing. I was so worried about other people’s perception of me that I kept forgetting what I wanted, thinking I better not let anybody down or else. The funny part was that I was letting myself down, constantly.” Could you relate to this comment?
4. What surprised you most about the authors life?
5. “People love spreading bad news. I wish that wasn’t true, but it is. I think it has something to do with facing our own mortality. When bad things happen to other people, if I knew then we breathe a collective sigh of relief that it didn’t happen to us, and we want to talk about it.” Do you agree this may have to do with facing our own mortality?
6. Were you familiar with Jann Arden the musician, author, actress or all the above? If not, will you try to experience any of her many artistic contributions?
7. “I always felt I needed to do what other people thought I should be doing. I was so worried about other people’s perception of me that I kept forgetting what I wanted, thinking I better not let anybody down or else. The funny part was that I was letting myself down, constantly.”

The above questions were created by Library staff to enhance your discussion of the book.

Author Biography

Jann Arden is a multi-platinum, award-winning singer, songwriter, actor and author. Arden has released 14 albums with 19 top ten singles. Arden's accolades include 8 JUNO Awards, 10 SOCAN Awards, and 4 Western Canadian Music Awards. In 2020, she was announced as an inductee into the Canadian Music Hall of Fame. Arden has also been inducted into the Canadian Association of Broadcasters Hall of Fame, has a Star on Canada's Walk of Fame and has been awarded the Order of Canada.

Arden has written five books, the most recent being her new memoir "If I Knew Then: Finding Wisdom in Failure and Power in Aging. The book follows Arden's 2017 Canadian best-seller, "Feeding My Mother: Comfort and Laughter in the Kitchen as My Mom Lives with Memory Loss", which spent a combined 44 weeks on The Globe and Mail bestseller lists. (From author's website)

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