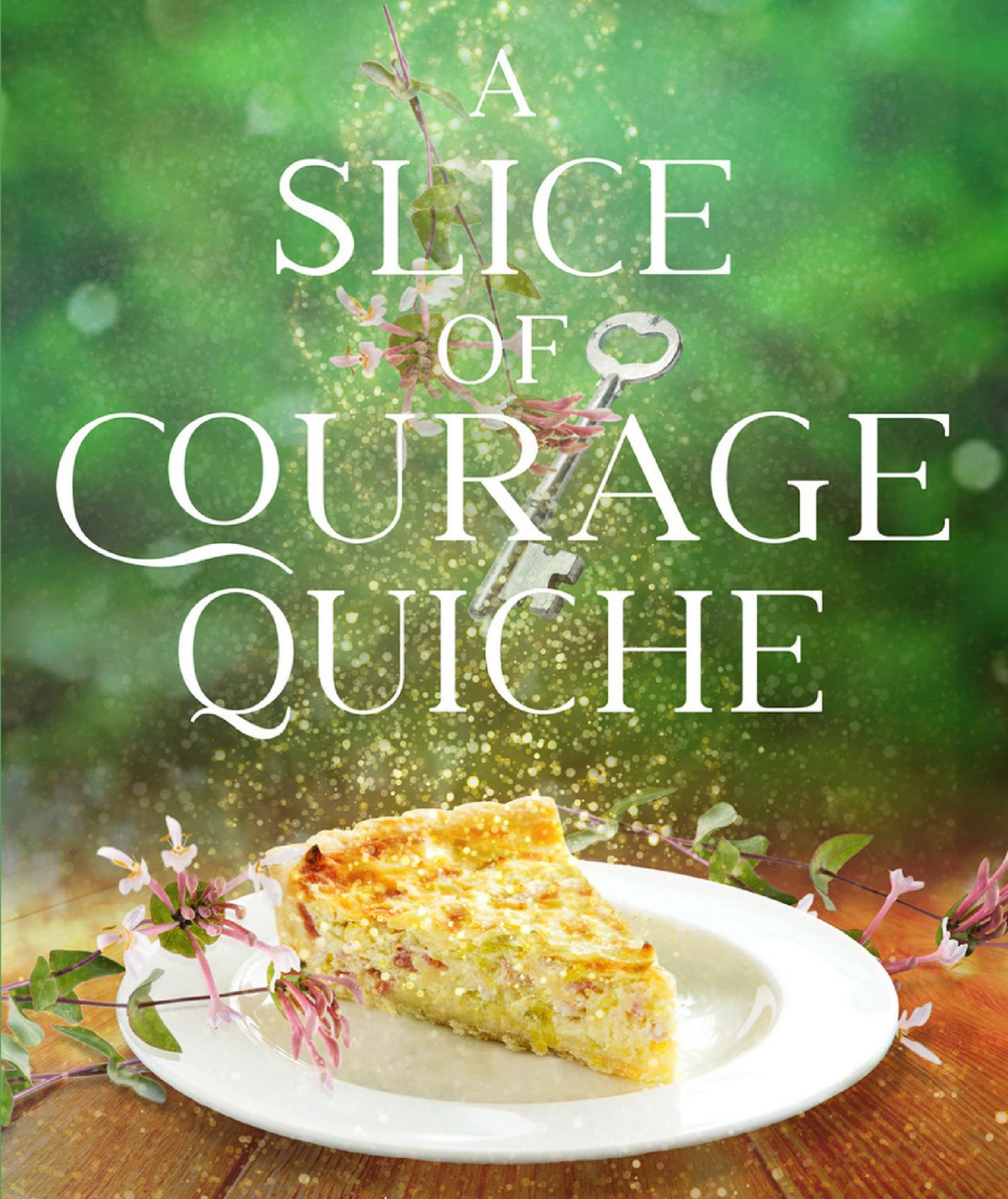


BESTSELLING AUTHOR
JENNIFER MOORMAN

The background of the cover is a lush green bokeh. In the center, a silver key is positioned vertically, with a sprig of pink and white flowers wrapped around its shaft. The title 'A SLICE OF COURAGE QUICHE' is written in a large, white, serif font, with the key and flowers acting as a visual separator between the words 'OF' and 'COURAGE'. At the bottom, a slice of golden-brown quiche sits on a white plate, also garnished with a sprig of pink and white flowers. The entire scene is set against a wooden surface.

A
SLICE
OF
COURAGE
QUICHE

READING GROUP GUIDE



This reading group guide for *A Slice of Courage Quiche* includes an introduction, discussion questions, ideas for enhancing your book club, and bonus material to elevate your experience. The suggested questions are intended to help you find interesting topics and new perspectives for your discussion. We hope that this guide will add more magic to your conversation and increase your enjoyment of the book.

Tessa Andrews believes she has her life all figured out, organized in numbered lists to ensure she doesn't make bad decisions. But after eating a quiche and receiving a skeleton key to a dilapidated mansion, a reckless impulse overtakes her.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Tessa has a difficult time trusting her instincts because of choices she made earlier in her life. She makes lists and consults her friends before making decisions. Do you reach out to others for opinions when making decisions or do you trust your gut?

2. In this story, Tessa sees herself as someone who has made poor life choices. But in meeting Paul, helping out others in the town, and trusting herself, she realizes that some people see her as strong and brave. How did having someone believe in her lead to Tessa finally believing in herself? When in your life have you experienced someone believing in you giving you the courage to believe in yourself?

3. At the start of the novel, there is a flood and Tessa and many others are displaced. Even though facing the prospect of having nowhere to live, Tessa helps others find rentals. For someone who doubts her own ability to make life choices, what do you think of Tessa's actions?

4. Tessa doesn't initially want to sell her condo, even though it's obvious "salvaging" what's left is unrealistic. Why do you think she struggles with letting go of the condo? If your house flooded and someone offered to buy it, would you be happy or distraught to sell your home?

5. Honeysuckle Hollow is more than a house. When Tessa first enters it, the disrepair is hard to miss, but she still feels that it deserves to remain standing. The house has a

greater purpose. How do you think Tessa's purpose and the house's purpose align?

6. Even though Tessa doesn't immediately believe in the garden's powers, she soon sees that Kate and also Mrs. Borelli are speaking truth. Do you believe that the garden's herbs are magical or do you believe it is the power of suggestion?

7. Paul is surprised when he learns that his parents have followed his adventures and decorated the upstairs apartment for him. Why do you think he stayed away so long? Do you believe that he will be satisfied living in Mystic Water? Why or why not?

8. Trudy Steele is a force in the book and someone who has been hanging onto the past for far too long. She states that it's been easier to hate the house than to remember the good times. However, when she finally relents and allows Tessa to own the house, Trudy says she wants to come back and see the rehab results. Have you ever felt strongly attached to a house? For instance, your childhood home? When you moved from this home, did you have regrets? Would you ever go back to visit?

9. Kate's family spear has been protecting the house for years. When Tessa digs it up, she has no idea what she's found. Austenaco Blackstone encourages Tessa to return the spear to the Cherokee or at least offer it to a museum. Ultimately Tessa decides to return the spear to Honeysuckle Hollow where it belongs. Would you have given the spear to the Cherokee or a museum, or would you have agreed with Tessa and allowed Kate to rebury the spear?

10. Are you interested in home rehab or improvement shows? If an HGTV show was based on Honeysuckle Hollow, would you watch it? If it were possible for you, would you consider buying a historic home and rehabbing it? Why or why not?

11. If the Mystic Water series were adapted for film and this story in particular, who would be your dream cast? What songs would you choose for the soundtrack?

12. If you stopped by Scrambled for a real diner meal, what would you choose from the menu? Which character from this book would you invite to eat with you?

13. If given the opportunity, would you eat a slice of Courage Quiche? Why or why not? In what part of your life would you hope the quiche instilled bravery?

ELEVATE YOUR EXPERIENCE

- 1.** Through the centuries herbs and plants have been regarded as magical, having medicinal properties, and ways to enhance lives. Research the different meanings, uses, and symbolisms of your favorite herbs, flowers, and plants. What are you most fascinated with in regard to your findings? Are there herbs you want to add to your garden?
- 2.** Set the mood for what you think resonates most with this book. Create a playlist full of the songs you think Tessa, Paul, and even Crazy Kate might choose, and play it during your book club. Whip up some of the most popular recipes inspired by the book, such as strawberry pancakes, french toast, buttermilk biscuits, deconstructed burrito bowls, and waffles.
- 3.** Perhaps you've felt like no one truly understood why you wanted to “take a leap” of faith like Tessa does. Share a time when someone in your life made you feel as though following your heart was the very best thing you could do. How did this friend or moment change your life for the better?
- 4.** Learn what else Jennifer is up to online at jennifermoorman.com.

STRAWBERRY PANCAKES



These strawberry pancakes are light, fluffy, and packed with flavor. This is Cecilia Borelli's special recipe to bring you comfort and to stir the hearts of loved ones.

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cooling Time: 10 minutes

Total: 20 minutes

Yield: 6 medium pancakes

Ingredients

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt, or to taste
- 1 cup milk
- 1 large egg
- 2 tablespoons melted unsalted butter
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup chopped fresh strawberries

Directions

1. In a medium bowl, whisk flour, brown sugar, baking powder, and salt together.
2. Whisk together melted butter, egg, vanilla, and milk.
3. Add the wet ingredients to the dry ingredients, and whisk until well combined. There may be a few lumps, but don't worry about these.
4. Let the batter rest for 10 minutes.
5. While the batter is resting, chop the strawberries into small cubes, discarding the leaves on top.
6. Fold the diced strawberries into the pancake batter.
7. Heat a flat-bottom pan over medium-high heat, and add a pat of butter or a tablespoon of oil to the surface of the pan. Scoop one-quarter cup of the batter, and pour it onto the heated pan.
8. When small bubbles appear on the surface of the pancake and burst, flip the pancake. Cook the other side for 2-3 minutes, until edges are slightly brown and set.

COURAGE QUICHE



This magical quiche recipe is baked in a super flaky homemade pie crust and filled with a variety of mood-boosting ingredients, including saffron. One slice and you're guaranteed to feel braver. Eat willy-nilly from the dish, and prepare yourself to be amazed at what happens next.

Prep Time: 2 hours, 40 minutes

Baking Time: 1 hour, 20 minutes

Total: 4 hours

Yield: 8 slices

Ingredients

1 10-inch piecrust, homemade or store-bought
4 large eggs
½ cup whole milk
½ cup heavy cream
2 teaspoons salt
1 teaspoon ground black pepper
1 pinch saffron = 20 threads
2 teaspoons lemon zest
1 cup shredded or crumbled cheese such as feta, cheddar, goat cheese, or gruyere
2 cups of add-ins: diced white potato, mushrooms, asparagus (any ratios you like equaling 2 cups total; all vegetable add-ins should be precooked before adding to quiche)
Thinly sliced tomatoes for top, optional

Directions

1. Prepare pie crust: To save time the day of baking, make pie dough the night before because it needs to chill in the refrigerator for at least 2 hours before rolling out and blind baking (next step).
2. Roll out the chilled pie dough: On a floured work surface, roll out the chilled dough. Turn the dough about a quarter turn after every few rolls until you have a 10-inch circle. Place the dough into a 9-inch pie dish. Don't trim the overhang; instead tuck it in with your fingers, making sure it is completely smooth. Chill the pie crust in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes and up to 5 days. Cover the pie crust with plastic wrap if chilling for longer than 30 minutes.
3. While the crust is chilling, preheat oven to 375°F (190°C).
4. Partially blind bake: Line the chilled pie crust with parchment paper. Fill with pie weights or dried beans. Make sure the weights are evenly distributed around the pie dish. Bake until the edges of the crust are starting to brown, about 15–16 minutes. Remove pie from the oven and carefully lift the parchment paper (with the weights) out of the pie. Prick holes all around the bottom crust with a fork. Return the pie crust to the oven. Bake until the bottom crust is just beginning to brown, about 7-8 minutes. Remove from the oven and set aside. (Crust can still be warm when you pour in the filling.)

5. Reduce oven temperature to 350°F (177°C).
6. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a whisk attachment or using a handheld mixer, beat the eggs, whole milk, heavy cream, lemon zest, saffron, salt, and pepper together on high speed until completely combined, about 1 minute. Whisk in add-ins (cheese and precooked veggies) and then pour into crust. If desired, decorate the top of the filling with thinly sliced tomatoes.
7. Bake the quiche until the center is just about set, about 45-55 minutes. Don't overbake. Use a pie crust shield or tinfoil to prevent the pie crust edges from over-browning.
8. Allow to cool for 15 minutes.

A conversation with Jennifer Moorman



Q: Was the title of your book, *A Slice of Courage Quiche*, always the title?

A: No, the original title was *Honeysuckle Hollow*. After Harper Muse relaunched *The Baker's Man*, I wanted to give the entire Mystic Water Series a lovely relaunch too, which included editorially refreshing this entire story. We also created a brand-new cover to match the new branding of *The Baker's Man*, and during the process of reimagining the storyline, we decided to revise the title too so that it would be more aligned with magical realism titles today. I also feel that the new title is intriguing and makes you wonder, *What is a Courage Quiche, and how do I get a slice?*

Q: Who's the main character of your book—and was that always their name?

A: Tessa Andrews is the main character, and her name was always Tessa. She first appears in *The Baker's Man*, as she is one of Anna's best friends. Lily is part of their trio and appears in this book too. After Tessa's role in *The Baker's Man*, I wanted to tell her story and showcase her actions from a different perspective.

Q: At the start of the book, what's the character's goal?

A: Tessa just wants to find a place to live. A part of her wants to save her condo and be able to move back in, but she learns quickly that's unlikely. Her organized life becomes chaos, but this is also what drives her to follow the impulse she has about Honeysuckle Hollow.

Q: What was the core idea for this novel—a plot point? a theme?—and where did it come from?

A: I wanted to get inside Tessa's head. In *The Baker's Man*, it's easy to see her as the annoying friend or the one who makes bad decisions. I wanted to show how her decisions have affected her after *The Baker's Man*. How did Tessa handle her life? She tries to control it with her lists and her organization. I wanted to delve into what might happen when Tessa realizes that listening to someone else's advice for your life isn't always what's best for you.

Q: At what point did you come up with the final version of the first line? What is it?

A: The original first few lines were very close to what they are now. These lines set up the climate, the current weather, and hint at what's coming to Mystic Water. **First two lines:** Every resident in Mystic Water, Georgia, suffered beneath a relentless humidity uncommon for an April spring. Townsfolk complained and decided it must be July.

Q: Did you know the ending of the book when you started?

A: I had a good idea of how I wanted it to end. Of course, the characters a lot of what they want once I start writing.

Q: What's something in this book that you've never done before?

A: I've never bought a historic home and fixed it up. I've daydreamed about it, but I would be even more clueless than Tessa going into such a massive renovation.

Q: How do you want readers to feel when they close the book?

A: I hope readers feel uplifted, hopeful, and surrounded by the magic of the everyday. I hope they see that following your heart and sometimes tuning out others' opinions of how your life should be is often the best thing you can do for yourself.

Q: What did you learn from this book? About writing, or life, or the writing life?

A: I learned a little about how much goes into renovating a historic home. Enough to know I'll likely never do it! I also learned new recipes because I like to bake and cook the dishes I write about so I can describe them accurately.

caramel cremes

mint tea

sugar



Tuesday, September 12, 2023

call
Mrs. Steele

Dear Ms. Tessa,

Please accept my apologies for my brutish behavior last night. If it were a full moon, I would blame my werewolf-like state on it. Lack of sleep stole my manners. I'm sorry for allowing a weary rest in a proper bed.

