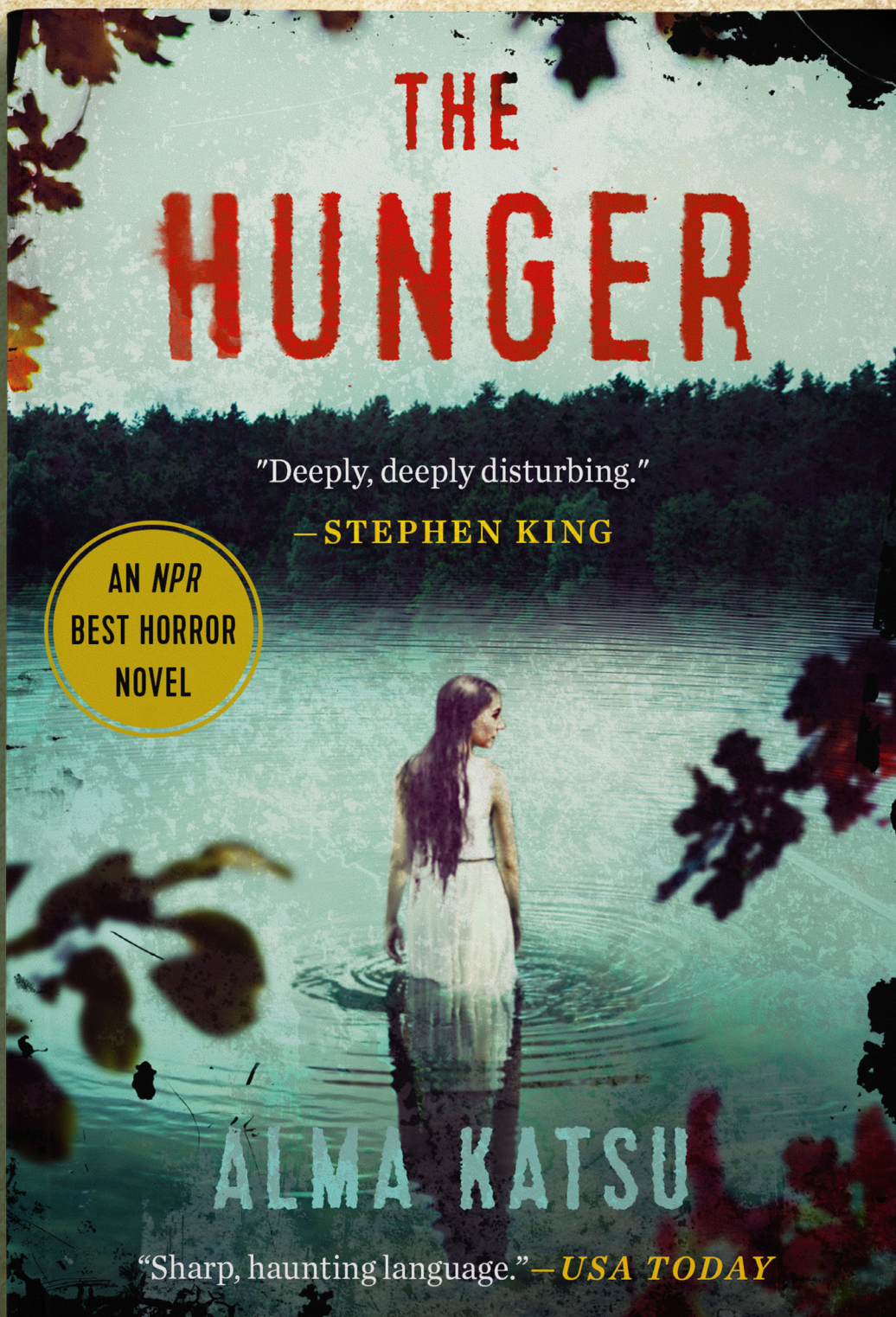


BOOK CLUB KIT



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EST. 1938

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 *The Hunger* is inspired by a well-known historical event. Did this history affect your reading of the novel? What perceptions did you have of the Donner Party before? Have they changed?
- 2 Hunger is shown in many different ways throughout the novel. What are the various meanings of “hunger” and what is the importance of the title? In what ways does the title mean something beyond the hunger for food?
- 3 Discuss the impact of fear and paranoia on the relationships within the party. What does *The Hunger* show us about “mob mentality”? How do group dynamics affect the group’s ultimate fate?
- 4 Many of the characters, particularly the narrators, are inhabited by both “good” and “evil.” Discuss the complicated ways in which *The Hunger* depicts morality. Which moral struggles resonated with you? Which did you find more difficult to accept?
- 5 In what ways were the narrators of the novel haunted by their past? How does the past influence their decisions during their fateful trip? How did your knowledge of their backstories affect how you perceived their actions?
- 6 In the book, female characters inhabit varied roles—wives, mothers, daughters, witches, temptresses, and survivors. Discuss the different ways in which women are portrayed, particularly Tamsen and Mary.
- 7 What did you find to be the most frightening moment of the novel?
- 8 Stanton’s grandfather told him that “evil was invisible, and it was everywhere.” How does evil begin to spread within the group, both literally and figuratively? What does the novel show us about the dark side of human nature?
- 9 What genre do you think *The Hunger* falls into? Literary fiction? Horror? Historical?
- 10 Why do we continue to be fascinated by the Donner Party? Are there any lessons that we can take from their story?
- 11 Discuss the various portrayals of destiny in *The Hunger*, as it relates to Western expansion and Manifest Destiny and to the idea of personal choice. Do you believe that the characters have predetermined fates? Can they control the paths their lives take?

IF YOU'RE **FEELING RAVENOUS**, WHET YOUR PARTY'S APPETITE WITH THESE **MOUTHWATERING RECIPES...**

PIONEER STEW

INGREDIENTS

2 tablespoons oil or fat
1 ½ lbs meat (beef, buffalo, venison,
or any kind you have on hand),
chopped into bite-sized pieces
Salt and pepper to taste
1 onion, diced into small pieces
3 tablespoons flour
6 medium potatoes, peeled and cubed
6 carrots, peeled and diced
2 turnips or rutabagas, peeled and diced
6 cups water

PREPARATION

1. Heat a Dutch oven on the stovetop or over a campfire using your favorite camp cooking method.
2. Add oil and, when the oil is hot, add the meat, browning on all sides. Season with salt and pepper. Add onion and let fry until soft. Add flour and toss ingredients in the pan to coat. Add remaining vegetables and water.
3. Cover and let cook, being careful not to overboil, for around one hour or until vegetables are soft and meat is tender. Serves approximately eight.

This is a bare-bones recipe, in keeping with utilitarian pioneer larders, but feel free to add what you like: green peas, corn, string beans, a dollop of tomato paste, garlic, celery, bay leaves, hot sauce, or whatever else will appeal to your family.

DONNER PARTY BLOODY MARYS

INGREDIENTS

6 slices peppered bacon
3 ¼ cups tomato juice
1 ¼ cups vodka
⅓ cup fresh lemon juice
1 tablespoon horseradish
2 teaspoons chipotle hot sauce
2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
½ teaspoon celery salt
½ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
6 stalks celery with leaves

PREPARATION

1. Cook the bacon in a large skillet over medium heat, turning occasionally, until golden brown and crisp, nine to eleven minutes. Drain on paper towels.
2. Combine the tomato juice, vodka, lemon juice, horseradish, hot sauce, Worcestershire sauce, celery salt, and pepper in a pitcher; refrigerate until ready to serve.
3. Pour the Bloody Mary mixture into six tall ice-filled glasses. Add a piece of bacon and a celery stalk to each.