

"An absolute master of storytelling. This book is a scandalous delight."

—REBECCA MAKKAI, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Great Believers*

# A Very Inconvenient Scandal

A Novel

## BOOK CLUB KIT

#1 *New York Times* Bestselling Author

# Jacquelyn Mitchard



# Discussion Questions

1. How would you feel if a family member — parent, sibling, or even aunt or uncle — were dating your childhood best friend?
2. Do you think there is always some competition involved when it comes to big life events? Is it possible to not compare one wedding to another, parenting styles, homes?
3. Frankie and Penn have a very clear bond, how do you think this story would have differed if she didn't have him to rely on?
4. And what about Ariel — did Frankie take her friendship for granted while overlooking her very real need as a person and as a woman for companionship and love?
5. How early on did you begin to question Carlotta's motive for returning? What tipped you off that her intentions were not totally what they seemed?
6. Why do you think Ariel was so accepting of Carlotta's return?
7. What impact did the Cape Cod setting have on the story?
8. Could you see this being adapted as a film? Or a limited TV series? Whom would you cast as Frankie? As Ariel? As Mack? And especially, as Carlotta?



# Discussion Questions

9. Essentially, *A Very Inconvenient Scandal* is a novel about a family under siege. Do you think the worst trials that beset families – excepting, of course, wars and crimes and natural disasters – come from within the family itself or from outsider forces?
10. If you identify with one character more than the others, who is it? And why?
11. Was Frankie “wrong” to feel as she did about Mack and Ariel? Was Ariel “wrong” to have married her best friend’s father, especially after having been so close to Mack’s first wife, Beatrice?
12. Can a family ever really heal from a shock like the ones endured by the Attleboros in *A Very Inconvenient Scandal*? What helps encourage healing in families? Can you think of an incident in your own family that you thought would never be resolved?
13. What role do the ghosts from the sea play in the narrative? What do they symbolize?
14. In a similar way, what does the red sea eagle mean to the characters in the story?
15. Is there always a path to understanding the hurt in the history of someone like Carlotta Puck? Does it matter, considering the things that they do?
16. People tend to think of Cape Cod as a summer paradise but many of the big events in *A Very Inconvenient Scandal* took place in the deep midwinter? Why do you think the author made that choice?



# Jacquelyn Mitchard



#1 *New York Times* bestselling author Jacquelyn Mitchard has written ten previous novels for adults; six young adult novels; four children's books; a memoir, *Mother Less Child*; and a collection of essays, *The Rest of Us: Dispatches from the Mother Ship*. Her first novel, *The Deep End of the Ocean*, was the inaugural selection of the Oprah Winfrey Book Club, and later adapted for a feature film. Mitchard is a frequent lecturer and a professor of fiction and creative nonfiction at Vermont College of Fine Arts in Montpelier. She lives on Cape Cod with her husband and their nine children.