



Reading Group Guide

The Medium

a short story



INTRODUCTION TO *The Medium*

When tragedy visits you and delivers something unimaginable, the circumstances have a way of opening your heart and soul like you can't imagine.

Eight months ago the unthinkable happened — Lacy's husband died in a single car collision. She managed to get through the past few months, for the sake of their young son, but fears she has lost more than a husband.

The Medium is a touching personal story about a resident of Savannah, Georgia, who is struggling to find a way to begin again after the unexpected death of her husband.

This heartwarming short story takes place in the office of a medium who helps Lacy begin the healing process and move beyond her fears.

In death, the one you love has left this world but he or she has not left you.

A CONVERSATION WITH *Linda Westphal*

Q. Why did you decide to write a short story?

Like people, stories come in all shapes and sizes. Some stories can be told in a paragraph, others need 500 pages or more. What's important is the story, not how many words it takes to tell it. ***The Medium*** is a story about transformation. When Lacy walked out of Caroline's office at the end of the story, she saw her life and the world in a whole new way. Any memorable moment that transformed your life could also be a short story.

Q. Is that an orb on the book cover?

Indeed! It's a photo I took in 2003 when I spent three weeks in Savannah's Historic District. It was my first visit to Savannah and I was mesmerized by the city. During my stay I purposely did not rent a car, because I wanted to get to know the Historic District. It's nearly impossible to get to know a place from a car. You have to walk, at a slow pace, to really see a city. During my visit I wanted to get to know Savannah's history, the charm of its 22 squares, the architecture and iron works, the hidden gardens, and walk the cobblestone streets. I can tell you without a bit of hesitation that Savannah vibrates with energy (both past and present) and is a joy to visit. One day I was out for a walk when I saw the building you see in the photo. I had to photograph it. I took a few shots and then started to walk away. That's when I felt the urge to turn and look at the building one last time. I snapped two more photos, finally satisfied that I had what I needed. Later, when I was reviewing the day's photos, I noticed the orb. It was the first of the two photos I had taken after I turned to take another look at the building. The two shots were of the same angle and taken a second or two apart; the first photo had the orb, the second one did not. I know the orb in my photo is the energy of someone who once lived in Savannah. Whoever it is, he or she wanted to be in the photo. I suppose they knew before I did that someday the photo would be on the cover of a popular book.

Q. Have you ever received a reading from a psychic or a medium?

Yes. I've been to a few psychics, mediums, and some psychic/mediums (as well as energy healers, such as Reiki and chakra practitioners). They all had their own style of communicating what they saw or felt when tapping into my energy and the energy of my family and friends on the other side. Since a very young age, I've been curious about the energy I can feel around me. This sensation has made me believe that there is much more to the universe than what a person can see, touch, smell, hear or conceive in their mind. I believe we can all feel the universe's energy. All that's required is an open mind and a willingness to explore new possibilities. Another writer, Michael Crichton, wrote a memoir called *Travels* about his experiences when he explored "new age" topics; I highly recommend it.

Q. Define a great book.

When I must have the paper version of a book in my personal library, I know it's a great book. In some way the book has touched or inspired me deeply, or I feel connected to the story or a character. It's in my library because I want easy access to the book.



QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

The Medium

1. Before the story begins, the author asks you to read the story in a quiet place where your mind can relax. Why do you think the author suggests this? Did you read the story in a quiet place? Do you agree that reading is a meditative experience?
2. On page 1, Lacy says that tragedy has a way of opening your heart and soul like you can't imagine. Do you agree? Have you ever had a tragic experience that made you question the purpose of your life or cause you to become more spiritual?
3. Why do you think Lacy is nervous about receiving a reading from a medium? Do you think she is afraid of what she will hear? Do you think Lacy is skeptical about connecting with her deceased husband? Have you ever received a reading from a psychic or a medium?

“Your soul already knows what to do, Lacy. You came into this lifetime knowing. Don’t worry — you have it in you to begin again.”

4. Lacy had sensed her husband at their son’s birthday party but brushed off the feeling — as if it was all in her mind. Has this ever happened to you? Do you believe your loved ones on the other side visit and help you?
5. Caroline tells Lacy that everyone has a spirit guide — a guide you are given at birth to help you during your life. Do you believe you have a guide? Male or female? One or many? At times, do you feel an energy around you? Have you ever felt as if someone you can’t see is helping you?
6. Lacy appears to have a positive reaction to what her spirit guide is telling her about her life’s mission. While she had envisioned a future that included her husband, for the first time she is beginning to believe she has a future without him and it’s okay to write new dreams and plans. Do you think Lacy is also mourning the death of her former dreams?
7. Do you think loss (death, divorce, end of a long-term relationship) is a way to help us grow internally or understand our life’s purpose better?
8. Lacy’s spirit guide says, “Your soul already knows what to do. You have it in you to begin again.” Do you think this is true for most people who experience a dramatic life event?
9. Lacy’s spirit guide tells her that they have known each other for many lifetimes. Do you think you have lived many lifetimes? Have you ever met someone for the first time who felt familiar? Have you ever visited a place for the first time that felt familiar (that feeling of déjà vu)?
10. The story takes place in Savannah’s Historic District. Have you been to Savannah? What did you like/dislike about your visit?

Relax.
Indulge in the meditative
experience of reading.

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Goodreads