

BOOK CLUB KIT

MEREDITH HAMBROCK

SHE'S

A

LAMB!

A NOVEL



“Break a leg my darling not that you need it I hope you know you are the most incredible performer this world has ever seen and soon everyone will know it.”

Jessamyn St. Germain is meant to be a star. Not an actor who occasionally books yogurt commercials and certainly not a lowly usher at one of Vancouver’s smallest regional theaters. No, she is bound for greatness, and that’s why the part of Maria in the theater’s upcoming production of *The Sound of Music* is hers. Or it’s going to be.

Jessamyn may have been relegated to the position of childminder for the little brats playing the von Trapp children, but it’s so obvious she’s there for a different reason — the director wants her close to the role so when Samantha, the lead, inevitably fails, Jessamyn will be there to take her place in the spotlight.

This must be it. Because if it isn’t, well, then every skipped meal, every brutal rehearsal, every inch won against a man attempting to drag her down will have all been for nothing.

Sharp, relentless, and darkly funny, *She’s a Lamb!* is a cutting satire about the grotesque pall patriarchy casts over one woman’s delusional quest to achieve her dreams and the depths she will sink to for a chance at the life she’s convinced she deserves.

PRAISE

“Hambrock keeps the reader on edge via Jessamyn’s unreliable narration . . . It’s a showstopping performance.”

– PUBLISHERS WEEKLY

“For readers who enjoy dark, uncomfortable humor and tales of mental spiraling.”

– LIBRARY JOURNAL

“While intricately plotted, it has the pace and verve of a prestige comedy . . . Beneath Hambrock’s light touch and disturbing humour are sharp insights into the mental costs of ambition, especially for women.”

– LITERARY REVIEW OF CANADA

“Told from Jessamyn’s point of view, at first charmingly unhinged, then terrifyingly disturbed, *She’s a Lamb!* is a dive into the mind of a deeply delusional woman . . . Audacious and darkly funny.”

– BOOKLIST



SOUNDTRACK

The Official *She's a Lamb!* Soundtrack

Whether on her way to rehearsal or hanging out backstage, here are 12 songs we know Jessamyn is playing on repeat.

1. **MARIA** from the original *Sound of Music* soundtrack
2. **DONT RAIN ON MY PARADE** by Barbara Streisand
3. **IT'S THE HARD KNOCK LIFE** from the original *Annie* soundtrack
4. **REVOLTING** from the original *Matilda the Musical* soundtrack
5. **I DREAMED A DREAM** from the original *Les Misérables* soundtrack
6. **NOBODY'S SON** by Sabrina Carpenter
7. **MAYBE THIS TIME** by Liza Minnelli
8. **CELL BLOCK TANGO** from the *Chicago* motion picture soundtrack
9. **MY KINK IS KARMA** by Chappell Roan
10. **SINGIN' IN THE RAIN** from the original *Singin' in the Rain* soundtrack
11. **ROSE'S TURN** by Bette Midler
12. **WHAT DREAMS ARE MADE OF** by Hilary Duff



She's a Lamb!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Jessamyn St. Germain is a struggling musical theater actress hired to be the childminder for the kid actors in a production of *The Sound of Music*, and she is determined to steal the lead role by any means necessary.

1

For many readers, Jessamyn is a deeply unlikeable character, but they still found themselves rooting for her. Did you root for Jessamyn? Why do you think this is?

2

Jessamyn has a really narrow focus and more than a few blind spots. What do you think might've helped her widen her perspective? What was stopping her?

3

Jessamyn has a big opportunity in this book to become the lead in a new play called *Sister Gorgeous* that could've been her big break, but she turns it down. Why do you think she did this? What does her choice have to say about the cost of making art?

4

She's a Lamb! joins a trend of books featuring “unhinged women.” What do you think of the term “unhinged woman?” Why do you think “unhinged woman” books are so popular right now?

5

Jessamyn is a great actress. What do you think it is about her that makes her great? What qualities make a great performer? What famous actresses might play her if this book ever adapted for film?

6

F***, Marry, Kill: Vishal, Rudy, Anton.

7

Seagulls screech onto the page more than a few times in this book. One of the epigraphs is from Chekhov's famous play *The Seagull*. Has anyone ever seen or read this play? Did you find any connections here?

8

What do you think Jessamyn's top five favourite musicals are?

9

This novel is, at its heart, a tragedy. What is the value of a tragic story?

10

Tragedies are known for having endings that are often inevitable. Do you think Jessamyn's ending was inevitable, or do you think things could have ended differently for her if she'd made different decisions?

11

She's a Lamb! is largely about the dangers of unbridled ambition. Do you think the relationship between art and delusion, or success and delusion, is a necessary one? Other than Jessamyn, do you think any other characters are living in delusion?

12

What do you think happens to Jessamyn after the final page? What alternate endings can you imagine for her?

Dear Reader,

Thank you so much for choosing *She's a Lamb!* for your book club. I'm so happy you decided to spend some time discussing Jessamyn St. Germain's quest to become the greatest musical theatre star of her generation. I have a feeling she thinks you have a great taste in books.

I was inspired to write this novel when I was working a part-time job as an usher at a theatre company. I had recently turned thirty, and the white-hot writing career I thought I was going to have didn't seem to be panning out. Instead, I was scanning tickets, cleaning toilets, and having strange customer service interactions every night, all the while writing each and every morning, trying to create stories that were moving and visceral and daring. I kept coming up short, and I was very frustrated.

Depressed and about to begin working on a musical production of *The Sound of Music*, I decided I'd try writing a novel about an actress who works as a childminder for the kid actors in a production of the same show I was about to watch over and over and over again. Thinking I was in for a warm-hearted story, instead, Jessamyn St. Germain appeared on the page. Confident, problematic, and destined for greatness, I was terrified to meet this ego-driven actress who didn't know how to take no for an answer. She spoke her truth boldly, did her best to juggle three boyfriends, and took me on a wild journey of transformation I'll never forget.

I've always been drawn to stories about women and their ambition — how they become who they are meant to be. It is my sincere hope that this novel opens up conversations in your book club about ambition — about who you all want to be in the world and how you can help each other on your individual quests for greatness, whatever that looks like.

Do we need more women like Jessamyn? I don't know if I can say yes to that in good conscience, but I sincerely believe we need more women who are willing to put themselves out there, for better or worse, to step into the spotlight and make themselves seen. And heard.

I'd love to hear your thoughts about *She's a Lamb!* and to better understand what you take away from Jessamyn's deeply transformative journey. Feel free to tag me in any photos on Instagram @meredithhambrockbooks. There's nothing I love more than seeing people gather to talk about stories, especially stories about women.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Meredith Hambrock". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Meredith Hambrock



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Meredith Hambrock's debut novel *Other People's Secrets* was called “audacious” and “fabulous” by the *New York Times*. She has been a finalist for the CBC Short Story Prize and worked extensively in television, most recently in the writers' room for the Canadian Screen Award–winning sitcom *Corner Gas Animated*. She lives in Saskatoon.

