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## BRIDE FLIGHT

by Marieke van der Pol

Translated from Dutch by Colleen Higgins

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### Some topics to consider while reading *Bride Flight*:

- Marriage and relationships
- Destinies being intertwined
- Friendship and romance
- Unwed motherhood
- Immigration and cultural difference
- Secrets and choices

In 1953, Ada, Marjorie and Esther, three young women yearning to escape the hardships of post-war life in the Netherlands, and their own past, take part in an international air race and travel to New Zealand in a flight full of other girls like them: brides on their way to their fiancés.

During the flight they meet Frank, a charismatic bachelor who will come to have a dramatic influence on their lives. While their lives in New Zealand follow different courses, when they are reunited years later they discover how intrinsically their paths have been bound together.



### About Marieke van der Pol

Marieke van der Pol shot to fame in the Netherlands as a lead character in the popular TV series *Look Out!*. She gave up her acting career when she discovered her true passion in life: writing. Prize-winning success writing for TV series and films led Marieke to write the original screenplay *Bride Flight* which she then adapted into her first novel *Bruidsvlucht - Bride Flight*. Marieke lives in Amsterdam and has one daughter.

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**Discussion questions**

- 1 Discuss the similarities and differences between the lives of the three central characters Ada, Marjory and Esther. Did you find yourself identifying more with one character over the others?
- 2 Esther dealt with her war-time grief by being highly ambitious. Would she have been happier if she had confronted her past, or was it better for her that she chose to live only in the present?
- 3 Esther wants to assimilate into New Zealand culture, unlike Leon who stays within the local Jewish community. Is it better for immigrants to blend in with the established culture of a place or should traditional identities and practices be maintained? Would a balance of the two be preferable?
- 4 Were these women naïve to think that they could leave their pasts behind? Is such a thing possible, or is the past too ingrained in our personalities and subconscious to ignore?
- 5 Ada stays with Derk out of matrimonial and maternal duty. Was she right to stay with Derk, or should she have followed her impulses and left him for Frank? How would Ada's life have been different if she had chosen Frank to begin with? Could she guarantee that Frank would have made a better husband?
- 6 Marjorie sees herself as a 'barren failure'. How does this affect her marriage to Hans?
- 7 Discuss Hans and Marjorie's decision to raise Bobby as their own son and for Esther to be absent from Bobby's life. Was this a selfish decision or was it motivated by a need to survive in a society where social stigmas attached to unwed mothers and barren women were still very prevalent?
- 8 Did Esther and Marjorie make the right decision by not telling Bobby that Esther was his birth mother? In your opinion, is it acceptable for parents to withhold important information from their children, even when their children become adults?