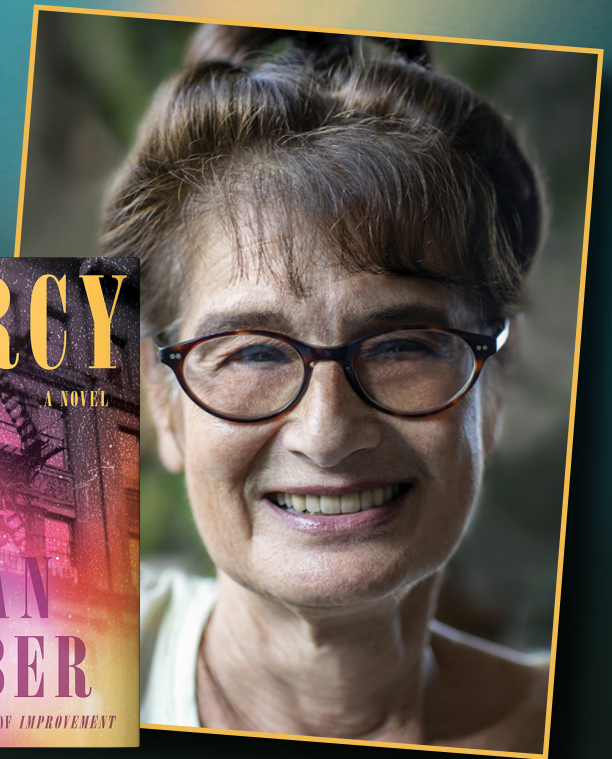
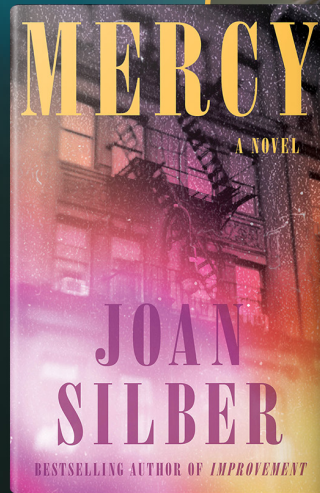


OFFICIAL READING GROUP GUIDE

1. Did you find the beginning of the book particularly dark or difficult? How did your perspective on the tone change as the story continued?

2. Did you expect the way the narrative was told through such a wide variety of characters? Were there different perspectives you wanted to hear from or return to?



3. How did you feel about the initial shift to Astrid’s point of view? How did it change your understanding of the characters?

4. The author has written other books in this form, with each chapter told by a different character, with links embedded. Why would a writer want to do this? Have you read other novels written this way? How is Silber’s different?

5. What do you make of Ivan’s pivotal choice? Do you understand where he’s coming from? What would you have done differently?

6. Why do you think so much of the book is spent with the young women who weren’t part of Ivan’s initial story?

7. Do you think gender plays a big role in the paths each character takes through the book? How about society’s changing ideas about love and sex?

8. How does the book explore the role of a person’s past in their present and future? Did it make you think about anything in your own past?

9. Did you enjoy the setting of New York City in the 70s/80s? Do you think the same story would have been possible elsewhere?

10. Were you surprised by the ending? Which characters do and do not receive “mercy”? Do you think the book treats forgiveness as something one has to earn or deserve, or something given freely?

11. Which character’s life and choices do you relate to the most? Which has stuck with you after finishing the book?