

An Educator's Guide to  
*Julie Berry's*  
**LOVELY WAR**  
and Other Works

THE ACTIVITIES IN THIS GUIDE ALIGN WITH COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS  
AND FIT INTO THE CURRICULUM FOR GRADES 7-10



# Curriculum Connections: Reading, Writing, and Researching

## PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

### ANTICIPATING WITH QUOTES:

Organize an activity where students complete an anticipation guide using key quotes from characters in *Lovely War*. Each student (or student pairs) is given a quote with no identifying information for the character(s) and uses it to complete one of the questions on the anticipation guide. They then trade quotes with another student and proceed through the guide accordingly. Provide students with about 15 minutes to complete this part of the activity with the understanding that they may not complete a response for all of the questions.

After time has expired, put students into groups to discuss the responses on the anticipation guide that they correlated to the quotes they were given. Discussions should focus on what elements of the quote moved them to their response, and what they predict are some of the likely character traits they expect to present themselves or be developed in the novel.

### SAMPLE QUOTES:

*“Why, then, does Ares find the hairs on his arms prickling with jealousy? Even now, though the golden net divides the blacksmith from the goddess, there’s something between [the two of] them. Something he can neither conquer nor destroy. Impossible though it is, a silver thread binds Hephaestus and Aphrodite together, if only slightly, barring Ares from making Aphrodite completely his own.”* (Ares, 15)

*“The war, he decided. The war addled his senses. The war had driven the whole world to the brink of insanity. Hasty war weddings and fatherless war babies and last-minute love. The whole cheap, flimsy spectacle of it.”*  
(Aphrodite on James, 31)

*“Playing with the soldiers’ band sounded better than dressing up like a toy soldier every day to operate the elevator at a high-rise office building in Midtown Manhattan. It had been the best job he could find after leaving school. But there are only so many times you can smile and wish “Good morning” to white men in suits who don’t answer, nor even look at you, before you start to question your own existence.”* (Apollo on Aubrey, 66)

*“My most outrageous scheme? I’ve already put it into motion. Soon after you left, I submitted my application to be an entertainment secretary in the YMCA relief hut in France... My parents are fit to be tied. They begged me to request a London hut, but I am determined to go where the soldiers are in greater need of diversion to get their minds off the war. I dread performing, but I can’t possibly fear it as much as the soldiers dread the battlefield.”*  
(Hazel, 91-92)

*“For the next four years she grew into young womanhood surrounded by soldiers and weapons and war. She politely deflected declarations of love and poured thousands of cups of coffee. She worked tirelessly to provide comfort to others who would face the German guns. She believed that if she could comfort them, she she might one day receive comfort, too.”* (Hades on Colette, 122)

### SAMPLE ANTICIPATION GUIDE QUESTIONS:

- What do you imagine the setting to be for this quote?
- What is the greatest character flaw for this character? The greatest asset?
- How does this character relate to their own past?
- How does this character approach the future?
- If you could hope for one thing for this character, what would it be?
- What do you expect the greatest challenge to be as this character proceeds?
- If disappointment or tragedy were to lay ahead for this character, what would it likely be and how would they confront it?

## KNOWLEDGE RATING CHART:

As a pre-reading activity, have students complete a knowledge rating guide structured in the following manner:

TOPIC		KNOWLEDGE STATEMENTS/QUESTIONS
<b>Trench Warfare in WWI</b>		1)
Knowledge Rating	1 2 3 4 (Low → High)	2)
Learning Interest Rating	1 2 3 4 (Low → High)	3)
<b>Women in WWI</b>		1)
Knowledge Rating	1 2 3 4 (Low → High)	2)
Learning Interest Rating	1 2 3 4 (Low → High)	3)
<b>The Ragtime Era and Jazz in America</b>		1)
Knowledge Rating	1 2 3 4 (Low → High)	2)
Learning Interest Rating	1 2 3 4 (Low → High)	3)
<b>Racial Segregation in the US Army</b>		1)
Knowledge Rating	1 2 3 4 (Low → High)	2)
Learning Interest Rating	1 2 3 4 (Low → High)	3)
<b>Belgium in WWI</b>		1)
Knowledge Rating	1 2 3 4 (Low → High)	2)
Learning Interest Rating	1 2 3 4 (Low → High)	3)
<b>Paris: 1918 and 1942</b>		1)
Knowledge Rating	1 2 3 4 (Low → High)	2)
Learning Interest Rating	1 2 3 4 (Low → High)	3)
<b>Life for British Soldiers in WWI</b>		1)
Knowledge Rating	1 2 3 4 (Low → High)	2)
Learning Interest Rating	1 2 3 4 (Low → High)	3)
<b>The Arts in the Great War Era</b>		1)
Knowledge Rating	1 2 3 4 (Low → High)	2)
Learning Interest Rating	1 2 3 4 (Low → High)	3)
<b>Treating the Wounded in WWI</b>		1)
Knowledge Rating	1 2 3 4 (Low → High)	2)
Learning Interest Rating	1 2 3 4 (Low → High)	3)

Instruct students to complete the guide by circling their confidence in their knowledge of the topic prior to reading (1 to 4), listing three to four statements of their knowledge of the topic or questions they would like to investigate about it, and a rating of their degree of interest in learning more (1-4).

Teachers and students can use this guide to both highlight target areas for learning and to pursue research investigations that meet areas of greatest interest to students.

*\*\*Correlates to Common Core Standard Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details R.L. 7.2.; Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration S.L. 7.1., S.L. 8.1., S.L. 9-10.1., S.L. 7.2., S.L. 8.2., S.L.9-10.2., S.L. 7.3., S.L. 8.3., S.L. 9-10.3.*

## Exploring *Lovely War* with Discussion and Writing

*The following questions may be utilized throughout the novel study as reflective writing prompts or alternatively, they can be used as targeted questions for class discussion and reflection.*

- What do you think Berry intends for you to think about when you see the novel's title? In what ways could we characterize war as "lovely?" Could we characterize love as some form of war? What happens to our concept of the two conditions if we pair them? (Consider revisiting this after reading the novel.)
- Evaluate the author's utilization of Hephaestus's "kangaroo court" (pg. 9) staged in a fine hotel in New York City in the middle of World War II as the forum for telling the tale of *Lovely War*. How does using an impromptu trial help to give meaning to the stories of Hazel, James, Aubrey, and Colette in 1918? Would anything be lost or gained by removing the mythological narrators, or making the event a conversation at an Olympian dinner party?
- Similarly, what do you find striking or noteworthy about Berry's organization of the novel's events into acts, and entre'act, like a play for the stage?
- Do you find that the perspectives of the mythological narrators alter your approach to reading the story? What do you discern is the significance of leaving Hephaestus out of the storytelling?
- To a great extent, Hazel and James get to know one another through the exchange (or absence) of letters. How do you think that this affects their relationship as the story progresses?
- The scope of *Lovely War* is more or less the last year of the Great War, and the young protagonists have been affected by the first three years of the terrible conflict to varying degrees: from Aubrey and the Americans just getting their first taste of it to Colette, who has lost everything to it. To what degree do you think this influences their actions in the story? How might they all have responded to their circumstances differently if the story had taken place in 1914, when the war began?
- Using textual support, compare the role of music in the characterizations of Hazel and Aubrey. Do the same for the role of "the soldier" in the characterization of Aubrey, the men of the 15<sup>th</sup> New York/369<sup>th</sup> US Infantry, James, and his chums in the BEF 5<sup>th</sup> Army. Likewise, discuss comparisons for the role of "war support" for Hazel, Colette, Mrs. Davies, and the 15<sup>th</sup> New York Band. Finally, discuss the role of "the wounded" in the characterization of Colette, James, Aubrey, Frank Mason, Hazel, Adelaide Mason, and Émile Segal.
- To what extent do you see the protagonists of the novel as agents for change who will use the war to do things differently once it is over? Cite textual examples that support your assessments.
- Both James and Aubrey are assigned to wartime duty that they find distasteful. How would you compare Berry's crafting of the way the two privates deal with "doing their duty?" How do you think their characters might have progressed through the story differently had they been able to exchange places?
- As Hades describes the fates of Colette's family in the razing of Dinant, he notes that "Colette the child died that day." (Hades, 121) It can be argued that Colette, Aubrey, and James all endure a 'coming of age' experience that originates with witnessing the horrific deaths of people close to them. How do those experiences, and their efforts to cope, shape their characters?
- Consider Hephaestus: a brilliant creator bearing what his fellow gods consider grotesque physical deformities who, for good or ill, is eternally betrothed to the embodiment of beauty. Which of the story's characters do you think best parallels Hephaestus, and why? Make an argument for two characters.
- Aphrodite approaches her story as one of love conquering long odds: war, racism, cultural differences, wounds, and so forth. Do a comparative assessment of the odds against the young lovers in *Lovely War*. Do you think that the odds that are stacked against Hazel and James are greater than those for Aubrey and Colette? How about compared to those facing Hephaestus and Aphrodite, or Aphrodite and Ares?
- Think about Hades's role in the story: what his narration does for the story, how he functions as an actor in the events, and the relationship he appears to have with the other Olympians. What are we to make of it?
- How much do you see the story unfolding according to the reliability of communication between the characters? In certain instances it is interrupted by the conditions of war, and in others by the characters themselves. Do you see the story developing differently if these circumstances were altered?

- What are three or four words that you would use to describe or characterize Aubrey? How do his interactions with key characters in his story—his parents, Jim Europe, Joey Rice, Hazel Windicott, the southern Marines, Colette, Émile Segal—alter or enhance those characteristics?
- James Alderidge is the only one of the four protagonists who has no “Apollonian story” (that is, he isn’t a musical artist). What, then, is his “art?” Who do you perceive to be his Olympian touchstone? Based on your choice, do you see his place in the story differently? Why, or why not?
- What role does Mrs. Davies play in the story? In what ways is she a catalyst for the choices made by Hazel, Colette, and Aubrey?
- What do you see as the terrible realities that the deaths of Joey Rice and Frank Mason reveal to us about death and mourning in 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> Century warfare? How might the characters and the story developed differently if the circumstances of their deaths and the aftermath had been different?
- One of the tragic realities of war is its capacity to dehumanize those involved in it, and how often that can be an asset to surviving. What are some of the ways in which you see the characters in the story being dehumanized by the Great War or surviving its horrors because of it? What are some of the ways in which they fight to hold onto their humanity? Are there any ways in which you see this reflected in the Olympian narrators?
- Early in the novel Hazel expresses a deep concern that James will be changed by the war. Who among the four protagonists do you see as being most changed by the war: Hazel, James, Aubrey, or Colette? To what degree could you argue that they have been changed for the better—where the gods might say that “the Fates got it right?”
- Using the phrase, “This is a story about...” supply five words to describe *Lovely War*. Explain your choices.

*\*\*Correlates to Common Core Standard Reading Literature: Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration S.L. 7.1., S.L. 8.1., S.L. 9-10.1., S.L. 7.2., S.L. 8.2., S.L. 9-10.2., S.L. 7.3., S.L. 8.3., S.L.9-10.3. Writing: Text Types and Purposes W. 7.1., W. 8.1., W. 9-10.1., W. 7.2. W. 8.2., W. 9-10.2., W. 7.3, W. 8.3, W. 9-10.3.*

## EXTENDED WRITING PROMPTS

- In several instances in *Lovely War*, characters find themselves unable to communicate what they are thinking or feeling at moments when they need to do it most. For example, Aubrey has moments where he wishes he could speak his mind to Cpt. Fish, and later fails to communicate with Colette after Joey’s murder. James struggles at points to explain to Hazel what the war has done to him, and for a time, Hazel has trouble finding the confident voice that she builds over the course of the war. For Frank Mason, there was no chance to say his goodbyes to Adelaide and his children. Even Aphrodite and Hephaestus could be argued to be suffering marital strife largely due to poor communication. Take on the role of Hermes, the messenger of the gods, and compose a letter in which you fill in the communication gap for one of the characters in the novel and explain their thinking and feelings for them. This can also be differentiated to allow students to craft their message in speech, song, music, or art.

*\*\*Correlates to Common Core Standard Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details R.L. 7.1., R.L. 8.1, R.L. 9-10.1 and Writing: Text Types and Purposes W. 7.1., W. 8.1., W. 9-10.1., W. 7.2., W. 8.2.,W. 9-10.2., W. 7.3, W. 8.3., W. 9-10.3.*

- Two musical touchstones feature prominently in the novel. The first is Hazel’s signature piano piece, Beethoven’s “Sonata Pathétique” (No. 8, Op. 13). The second is in the references to Jim Europe’s Ragtime compositions with the Clef Club and the 15<sup>th</sup> New York/369<sup>th</sup> Infantry Army Band. Have students create interactive posters, pages, video trailers, or multimedia collages that explore popular music of the World War I-era and place them into the context of *Lovely War* by incorporating the guidelines on the following page. Representative genres or modes of music would be Romantic, Expressionist, Music Hall, Ragtime, Blues, and Jazz. A number of online and mobile apps can be utilized for this project, such as Glogster, Pic-Collage, Smore, iMovie, and Piktochart.



Items to include:

- Biographical information about the composer or musicians
- Basic description of the structure, rhythm, or tone/mood of the piece
- Context for composition—what was happening in the world around the composer that may have influenced its creation?
- Assessment of how the piece reflects themes, events, or characters in *Lovely War*
- Comments on how or why the student believes the piece would have resonated with people in the midst of the First World War

*\*\*Correlates to Common Core Standard Writing: Research to Build and Present Knowledge W. 7.4., W. 8.4., W.9-10.4.*

- The totality of war in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century consistently compelled societies to reexamine and reconsider peacetime societal and cultural norms. In *Lovely War*, this dynamic is reflected in contentions that arise around gender roles, views on race, class consciousness, attacks on civilians, support for the maimed and the families of the dead, the use of deadly new technology, and the psychological effects of war. Have students write persuasive essays in which they write to wartime leaders to argue for things that must change in one of these areas after the war is over. They should utilize evidence from the text to support their arguments. This can be extended to writing letters to local, state, or national leaders on contemporary issues.

*\*\*Correlates to Common Core Standard Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details R.L. 7.1., R.L. 8.1, R.L. 9-10.1 and Writing: Text Types and Purposes W. 7.1., W. 8.1., W. 9-10.1., W. 7.2. W. 8.2., W. 9-10.2., W. 7.3, W. 8.3, W. 9-10.3.*

## BIOPOEM

Direct students to expand their understanding of character development and its links to the story by writing a Biopoem. In this writing strategy, characterization is defined and analyzed by identifying traits that reveal their thoughts, emotions, intuitions, and world view rather than just outward features of identity. Have students follow the template below for one or more characters in *Lovely War*.

LINE 1:

*First name*

LINE 8:

*Who gives \_\_\_\_\_ (three things)*

LINE 2:

*Three traits that describe the character*

LINE 9:

*Who has lost \_\_\_\_\_ (up to three things)*

LINE 3:

*Relative of \_\_\_\_\_*

LINE 10:

*Who has learned \_\_\_\_\_ (three things)*

LINE 4:

*Lover of \_\_\_\_\_ (three things)*

LINE 11:

*Who would like to see \_\_\_\_\_ (three things)*

LINE 5:

*Who feels \_\_\_\_\_ (three things)*

LINE 12:

*Resident of \_\_\_\_\_*

LINE 6:

*Who needs \_\_\_\_\_ (three things)*

LINE 13:

*Last name (if applicable)*

LINE 7:

*Who fears \_\_\_\_\_ (three things)*

*\*\*Correlates to Common Core Standard Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details R.L. 7.1, R.L.8.1., R.L. 9-10.1 and Craft and Structure R. L. 7.5., R.L. 8.5, R.L. 9-10.5, R.L.7.6., R.L. 8.6, R.L. 9-10.6*

## Interdisciplinary Investigations

- In Social Studies classes, assign students to investigate some of the larger events and historical processes of the First World War that provide context to the story in *Lovely War*. These would include:
  - The German Invasion of Belgium, 1914
  - Trench Warfare in World War I
  - The German Spring Offensive of 1918
  - The Allied Meuse-Argonne Offensive of 1918
  - New Weapons Technology in World War I
  - The American Expeditionary Force
  - Life for British Soldiers in World War I
  - Black Americans and World War I
  - Women and the First World War
  - Shell Shock and Psychotherapy in World War I
  - French *Poilu* in World War I
- The 369<sup>th</sup> US Infantry Regiment (“The Harlem Hellfighters”) were the most prominent of a number of American units of Black American soldiers who fought in the First World War. Like Jim Europe and Aubrey Edwards, many of these men saw their war service as a logical justification for their demands for improvements in civil rights in segregated American society. Direct students in social studies or language arts classes to research Civil Rights efforts in the 1910s-20s, focusing purposefully on the roles of World War I veterans or the degree to which war service was leveraged to demand greater justice.
- The Great War dramatically transformed the landscapes of Belgium, eastern France, and the Dolomite Mountains of Italy, and the effects of years of trench warfare are still dealt with today as unexploded shells continue to surface. Have geography, history, or science classes research the landscape of the Western and Italian Fronts before, during, and after the war, and apply some principles of human-environment interaction such as the architecture and engineering of the trenches, effects of the war on soil content and quality, “iron harvests,” safety and security when clearing explosive and poison gas shells that are a century old, and so forth.
- In science or social studies classes, investigate the role of the First World War in the development of the 1919 Influenza Pandemic. This lethal outbreak is referenced as part of the backdrop of the novel, and it claimed the lives of more than twice the number that died in combat in the war. Students can examine what made that particular strain of flu so deadly, how the war factored into the epidemiological process, and how it affected societies already strained by the hardships of the war.
- In visual arts, language arts, and humanities classes, take the opportunity to go beyond Apollo’s musical influences in *Lovely War* and research some of the art and poetry to come out of the trenches from 1914-18 and beyond. Some works, such as the shocking Expressionist paintings of Otto Dix and George Grosz or the poems of Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon, approach the level of the masters, while others are simple handicrafts or verses by amateurs seeking to use their peacetime talents or to pass the time during long stretches of boredom. Focus on unique stylistic elements, how materials are adapted to use, and thematic elements.
- In fine arts, language arts, and humanities classes, research the works, events, and key figures of The Harlem Renaissance. Finding its origins in part in the European experiences of men like the soldier-musicians in the 15<sup>th</sup> New York Infantry Band, this flourishing of Black American culture and society life continues to enrich American life to the present day. Have students investigate some of the art, literature, philosophy, dance, dramatic performance, music, and fashion of the movement, and consider the degree to which Jim Europe and Aubrey Edwards represent the themes of the movement. This can be extended to a study of the connections with and departures from the more mainstream Jazz Age, and even to aspects of the Harlem Renaissance that are still evident in contemporary society and culture.

## Making Thematic Connections

The Olympian narrators in the New York City hotel suite of Aphrodite and Ares in 1942 represent narrative and thematic strands in *Lovely War*: love, war, art, and death. These are then enriched by the utilization of supporting themes: hope, loyalty, courage, justice, family, friendship, creativity, dignity, and perseverance.

Select one of the supporting themes and find examples from the book that highlight that theme. Create a sample Life Lesson Chart using the model at: [http://www.readwritethink.org/lesson\\_images/lesson826/chart.pdf](http://www.readwritethink.org/lesson_images/lesson826/chart.pdf).

Have student groups develop presentations in which they use selections from the novel to support an argument for the dependency of the four major themes:

- How much of love is war/art/death?
- How much of war is love/art/death?
- How much of art is love/war/death?
- How much of death is love/war/art?

The discussion should focus on paired themes and compel the audience to really assess the degree to which they are inextricable. This can start with the correlations between the narrators: though each is the personification of one theme, Aphrodite (Love) and Ares (War) can't seem to stay away from each other; Apollo (Art) states a liking for fellow goddess Athena (War); and Aphrodite (Love) clearly displays great respect and affinity for her uncle, Hades (Death) while Ares (War) is a bit contemptuous. Supporting textual evidence can be extended into contemporary real-world evidence.

*\*\*Correlates to Common Core Standard Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details R.L. 7.2., R.L. 8.2, R.L. 9-10.2*

### MAKING MEANING BY EXPLORING SETTING

***Architecture in London & Paris in the Great War Era:*** James Alderidge has aspirations of becoming an architect (or even just a builder) of public and civic spaces after his time in the trenches ends, and Hazel encourages him to enjoy some of the architecture of Paris with her while on leave. Investigate some of the great architecture and urban landscapes of these two European capitals through the 1920s. Both had undergone significant transformations since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century, so consider how the new faces of the cities reflected the societies that went to war in 1914. To extend the research, consider including Berlin, Vienna, and St. Petersburg in the study.

***Paris in the Belle Époque:*** Aside from its distinctive architecture, society and culture in Paris also flourished in the two decades around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, and it became the beacon for the rest of Western civilization in an era known to history as the *Belle Époque* (“Beautiful Era”). Investigate some of the cultural norms of the *Belle Époque*, and attempt to establish links to some of the features and norms of the societies of the characters in *Lovely War*.

***Beyond the Y Hut:*** The services provided by volunteers like Hazel and Colette, the entertainment provided by the 15th New York Infantry Band, the parish dance in Poplar, and Mr. Windicott's job in the Town Hall hearken to a time when music halls, dance halls, stage shows, and big band entertainment were highly prized pastimes for Europeans and Americans of the Great War era. Research some of the features of these venues to get a profile of what it was like to “go out and have a good time” for young people at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

***Beyond Flanders' Fields:*** Through Colette, Berry offers some allusions to the suffering and destruction in Belgium in the first months of the war when it was invaded by the German Army. While the experiences of Belgian civilians in 1914 were rather unique for the First World War, they were a harbinger of the massive campaigns on civilian populations that would characterize subsequent wars in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries. Research the causes, processes, and effects of the Invasion of Belgium in 1914, and attempt to establish how it set the stage for the rest of the Great War (and thus, *Lovely War*).

*\*\*Correlates to Common Core Standard Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details R.L. 7.1, R.L. 8.1, R.L. 9-10.1.*

## ESSENTIAL QUOTES ANALYSIS

The language that an author uses in his or her work is essential to getting across the intended meaning. Select four quotes from *Lovely War* that seem to signify key ideas that the author hopes that readers take from the text. These might be quotes spoken by characters or from narrators, and page numbers should be included with the quotes. Have students develop a chart with the following four columns:

- Quote
- Page Number
- Relevance to the Novel
- Intended Meaning for Readers

The intended meaning should have relevance not only to the characters in the text, but to the lives of anyone who reads the book.

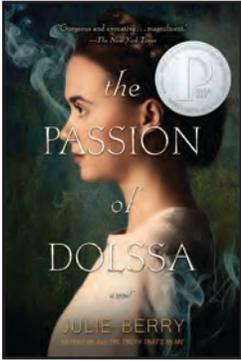
*\*\*Correlates to Common Core Standard Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details R.L. 7.1., R.L. 8.1., R.L. 9-10.1.*

## Connecting *Lovely War* to Art and Popular Culture

*For added novel connections, allow students to create one of the following as an additional means of exploring the novel:*

- Music is one of the critical thematic strands in *Lovely War*, and though its presence in the novel is placed in the stylings of the Great War era, the universality of the story offers the opportunity to link it to modern tunes. Give students the opportunity to create a playlist as a soundtrack for either one of the characters in the story or for one of its themes or storylines (e.g., “Aubrey & Colette’s Playlist”, or “Remembering the Boys in the Trenches Playlist”). For each track, a rationale should be provided for its inclusion linking it to the text. As an extension, they can also create cover art for the playlist page.
- As a differentiation activity for artists in your classroom, offer the opportunity to take on the role of “courtroom sketch artist” for Hephaestus’s impromptu trial. Have them select a particular scene, section, or series of narrations from the text and create sketches that tell its story.
- Direct students to create a book trailer for *Lovely War*. Begin by creating a story board, detailing which scenes they intend to incorporate into their trailer. Use a moviemaker program of choice such as iMovie, Movie Maker, Adobe Premier. Post finished trailers to [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com).
- One of the lasting legacies of the Great War era was the monument movement. Local and national memorials offered solace to the grieving when the nature and sheer scope of death in the war wouldn’t allow for traditional acts of remembrance. Give students the chance to design their own physical or virtual memorials to the characters in *Lovely War*. They should provide a written or oral statement for their concept, linking it to characterization or events in the text.



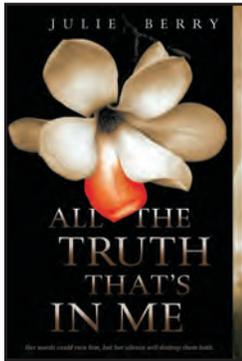


## Discussion Questions for *Passion of Dolssa*

1. Both Dolssa and Botille become fugitives at some point. In what ways do their escapes and journeys parallel each other? How does hiding from a threat influence their beliefs and actions?
2. Botille, her sisters, and Dolssa are all young women making their way through a heavily patriarchal world without the support of parents, a husband, or the Church. How does their independence affect perceptions of them? In what ways does the community reject or support them because of their gender and familial status?
3. Who are the villains of the story? What makes them villains? What sympathetic or redeeming qualities do they have, if any? To what extent should people who do evil things be viewed as sympathetic?
4. Dolssa's mother says "For my sake, guard your tongue to guard your life, my daughter" (p.10). Would it have been better for Dolssa to remain silent instead of speaking out? Why or why not? At what other points in the story does the dilemma of silence vs. standing up for one's beliefs play a role for any of the characters?
5. *The Passion of Dolssa* is rooted in historical events and uses Old Provençal words to develop the setting. What aspects of the book do you find the most relatable today? Do you see any parallels between our world and the one Botille and Dolssa live in?
6. There are many narrators throughout the book, from the main characters like Dolssa and Botille to minor characters like Hugo to the villagers whose testimony Lucien records. What do these perspectives add to the story? How would the book be different if we did not hear the words and voices of these multiple minor characters?
7. How does Dolssa's presence cause the village community to develop or fragment? Is her influence for the better or for the worse? What do you think she should have said or done differently after her arrival in the village?
8. Compare Dolssa's actions when she is separated from her beloved and her mother to Botille's actions when she is separated from her sisters and Symo. How do Dolssa and Botille react to loss? To reunion?
9. Botille and her sisters each have a specific gift or calling: matchmaking, fortune-telling, or hospitality. How do these gifts impact the sisters' influence on one another and on their community? What significance do the gifts have to Botille once she is separated from her sisters?
10. At the very end of the book, Fernando wonders, "But which was the greater sin? To lie, or to help a heretic?" (p. 446). How does this moral dilemma show up throughout the book for different characters? What might Fernando himself decide to do after the book ends?
11. At the end of the book, Botille says of her sister Sazia, "If I'd had to spot her solely on the life she led, I never would have recognized her. Would those who knew me ever recognize me?" (p. 420). How do the values of and choices made by the characters change over the course of the book? Are the changes for the better or for the worse?
12. What happens to the story if you consider each of the three main characters (Botille, Dolssa, and Lucien) as antagonists to the other two? What does each pair of enemies fight over?
13. Botille and her sisters go from homeless outcasts to valued contributors to their community; Dolssa, who once lived a privileged life, travels the opposite way. What is significant about this reversal of character arcs?
14. The good intentions of minor characters often produce disastrous results for the main characters in the story. Is this a reflection of reality? Why or why not?



Discussion questions contributor: Luisa Perkins



## Discussion Questions for *All the Truth That's in Me*

1. Evil takes several forms in this book. It is evoked physically, emotionally, and socially. Discuss the different ways that evil is represented—how it is exhibited, by whom, and to what effect. What role does gender play in the representation of evil?
2. Lucas's father, Colonel Ezra Whiting, is a particularly complex character. Do you believe his character is defined by what he did to Judith? Does his involvement in defending Roswell Station, or even his justification for muting Judith, give him any moral leeway in terms of how he should be judged? Or were his desires and actions enough to condemn him?
3. Do you feel that Ezra's death was heroic and does it exonerate him at all? Do you think he chose his death as an act of penance, or was it cowardice because he couldn't face the villagers after his lies and secret deeds were exposed?
4. Rupert Gillis is a decidedly malicious character. What purpose do you think he serves in the story? Is he merely a plot device, or does he play a role in developing Judith's character? How so?
5. Darrel's injury is presented as a direct juxtaposition to Judith's. Compare and contrast their situations and the way they are treated. Does gender play a role? If their situations had been reversed, how might things have been different for them? What other factors might play a role in the way Darrel and Judith are perceived after their injuries?
6. Judith's mother is the first to shame her upon her return. Why do you think she reacted the way she did? Did their society's attitudes toward disability, sexuality, and religion influence the way her mother valued Judith after her return, or was her response mainly personal? What effect did her reaction have on Judith, and how would Judith's story have been different if her mother welcomed her back with open arms?
7. What effect does the structure of the novel have on the story? What would change if the book were structured more traditionally?
8. The book ends in a place of uncertainty. We do not know if Judith and Lucas will stay in Roswell Station or if they will move on. What do you think the outcome would be if they decided to stay? If they leave? Would they be able to leave the past behind?
9. Although the physical violence enacted on Judith can be viewed as the crux of her story, there is also a great deal of emotional violence inflicted on her. Discuss these different forms of violence: In what ways do they influence Judith's development as a character? Do they affect different aspects of her identity?
10. Despite the vague setting and time period, in what ways does Judith's story relate to modern social issues? How significantly has contemporary public dialogue evolved regarding topics such as abuse, sexuality, and privacy? Has it changed at all?
11. Silencing unwanted voices is an important theme in this story. In what ways are victims and witnesses of crime or violence silenced now? How are girls' and women's voices silenced? Do culture and tradition play a role in whose voices may or may not be heard?



# PRAISE FOR JULIE BERRY



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★ “*Lovely War* proves again that Berry is one of our most ambitious writers.”

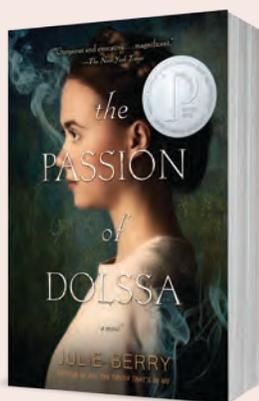
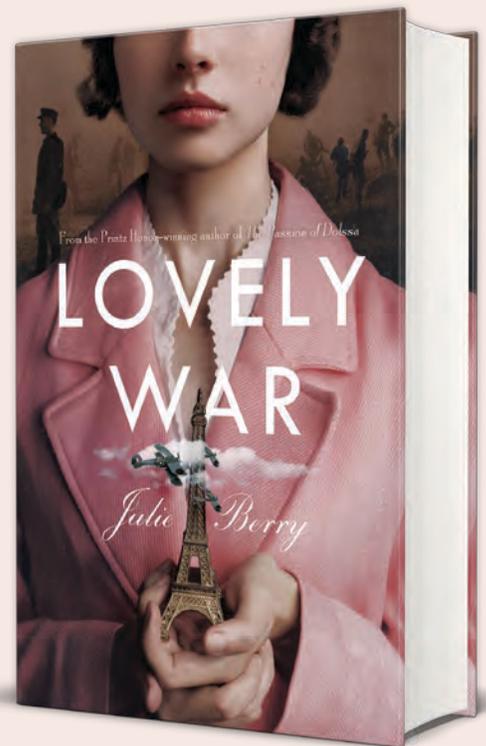
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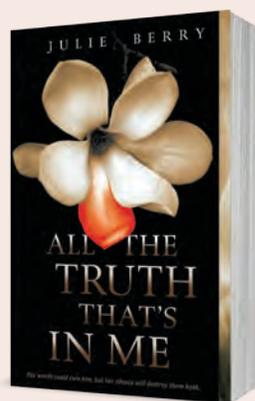


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★ Five Starred Reviews



“A distinctive novel that  
includes a powerful message  
about the value of women’s  
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★ Five Starred Reviews

