

BOOK  
CLUB  
KIT



# A TRUE ACCOUNT

*Hannah Masury's  
Sojourn Amongst the Pyrates,  
Written by Herself*

A NOVEL

KATHERINE HOWE

*New York Times* Bestselling Author





Welcome to the Book Club Kit for

# A TRUE ACCOUNT

Please note: In order to provide book clubs with the most informed and thought-provoking questions possible, it is necessary to reveal aspects of the story, as well as the ending. If you have not finished reading *A True Account*, you may want to wait before reviewing this guide.



1. When we first meet Hannah, she is bound out to service at a busy tavern on a wharf in Boston. In this period, this condition of servitude was very common for children and youths whose parents could not afford to keep them. What do you think Hannah's life would have looked like if she hadn't run away?
2. Hannah's world contains many embedded assumptions. She is growing up in a post Calvinist moment, but Christianity nevertheless informs all of her beliefs about the world. What are some observations on Hannah's varying relationship with religion over the course of the novel?
3. We get several glancing pictures of Hannah's sexuality throughout the story, some of which suggest her insistence on her own control, while others suggest that she has had to adapt to living without much safety or power. How, if at all, does her sexuality inform some of the choices she makes? How does it relate to her religious and social context?
4. Eventually we learn that Seneca along with John Somethingorother were the men hunting down Hannah at the beginning of the story. When do you think Seneca figured out Hannah's true identity on the Fancy? Was it when they were alone in the driftwood hut? Or did he suspect sooner?

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5. Marian, too, has secrets. How do you think Marian feels about her own sexuality? Does it pose risks for her in ways that are different from the ways that sexuality poses risks for Hannah? What do you think Marian means when she tells the Modigliani “I’m a pirate?”
  6. Words, books, and the question of literacy and authorship are recurrent themes throughout the story. What does it mean for an account to be “true?” Can something be emotionally true but factually false? What is the relationship between truth and fiction?
  7. Another recurrent theme is freedom versus servitude, or self-determination. In real life, the Golden Age of piracy was inextricably tied to the trans-Atlantic slave trade, the ultimate expression of human unfreedom. What role does the imagination of freedom and self-determination play in this story? Can any of the characters hope to ever really be free?
  8. All the characters are struggling to claim control over their own lives in one way or another. One of the characters who does this in a perhaps unexpected way is Kay. What do you think about Kay’s eventual reveal as the antagonist of this story? Were you surprised by this development? Is it really fair to characterize her as a villain, or is she just another pirate, going out on her own account, in her own way?
  9. In the dramatic final confrontation between the pirates and Hannah and Seneca, it’s strongly suggested that Hannah is actually the daughter Ned Low left behind after the death of his wife. Is Hannah more like Ned than she realizes? How or how not?
  10. Do you think anyone will ever find Will Fly’s treasure?
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