

The Girl in the Orange Dress: Searching for a Father Who Does Not Fail

Discussion Group Questions

- 1. In childhood, Margot did not experience many of her caregivers to be "for" her the way that she wanted and needed them to be. Can you think of other situations in which caregivers might be unable to be "for" a child in the way the child wants and needs?***
- 2. In the first chapter, Margot describes the way she navigated a rocky home life by smiling and pretending everything was fine. What are other ways a child might attempt to manage the unavoidable bumps of childhood?***
- 3. During college, eyes opened to the needs of those on the world's margins, Margot became convinced that God loved others, but she was less able to embrace God's love for her. (end of chapter 2) In your experience, has it been easier to believe that God loved others or that God loved you? Why?***
- 4. A series of relationships and circumstances Margot describes in chapter 3 cracked open the protective shell she'd erected around her heart. What are some other major life events that might also cause a person's defenses to fail, opening him or her up to what's been buried inside?***
- 5. Can you point to particular events in your own life—or the life of someone you know—which have dismantled reliable defenses? What was that transformational period like?***
- 6. Though Margot had heard God speak his truth to her heart, she continued desperately to search for love in the face of her birthfather, Max, in chapter 4. Toward what sorts of human faces do we turn to meet our deep needs?***
- 7. In what ways do human faces and relationships satisfy our deep needs? In which ways do they fail?***
- 8. In Chapter 8, Margot passed her childhood church and read the week's sermon title on the signboard out front: "A Scorpion for an Egg? Unimaginable!" The message was that fathers, even human ones, would never give bad gifts. What would your reaction be to that suggestion?***

9. ***Jesus addressed God as Father. In the course of her journey, it became increasingly difficult for Margot to recognize a "father" who was good. Is "Father" a way in which you feel comfortable addressing God? Why or why not?***
10. ***Margot finally embraced the journey toward healing when the pain of *not* doing so became unbearable. Are you more likely to take intentional steps to face your own life's losses or are do you engage with conflict only when circumstances have forced you to? Can you describe?***
11. ***Margot pursued a variety of resources on her journey: healing prayer, conferences, friendship, medication and therapy among them! If someone in your current community was struggling to heal from the past, what sorts of healing resources might be available to them?***
12. ***Often we avoid conflict so as to preserve relationships. Rather than trying to "protect" God any longer, in chapter 9 Margot finally raises her fist and gets angry. Have you ever reached the point where you were at last willing to engage in healthy conflict with another person or with God? How did it turn out?***
13. ***Margot slowly began to realize that God's love had been made known throughout her lifetime via human eyes, ears, faces, and voices. (Like her grandmother's beautiful wrinkly face.) Have there been particular human faces, on your journey, that have told you the truth about who you are? Describe a few of the ones that were "for" you.***
14. ***With the ears of her heart, Margot heard God's voice speaking the words, "I am for you." Were you to tip your face toward God's, how easy or difficult would it be for you to receive these words? Do they ring true in your experience, or fall flat?***
15. ***In the closing paragraphs of the book, as Margot imagines God writing her name on his palm, she knows that name which God uses for her to be "beloved." What would be the affectionate name God would use for you?***
16. ***Although our hearts long for a Disney-style fairy tale ending, real life is typically a little more...messy. In the process***

of redemption some relationships will be restored & others will not. Are there ways that you, or others, have had to learn how to deal with broken relationships that aren't fully restored?