



Book Club Reader's Guide

A GAMBLE AT SUNSET

VANESSARILEY.COM

VANESSA RILEY

Table of CONTENTS

03 ABOUT VANESSA RILEY

Bit More About Vanessa's Life

04 BEHIND THE SCENES

A Little More about Vanessa, Pics, and
Reading List Checklist

06 BOOK CLUB QUESTIONS

A Lot of Questions to Aid Discussions

10 PLAYLISTS

Music Feeds The Soul

11 RECIPE FUN

Some Yummy Recipes. Bake for Fun.

15 HOW TO HELP

How to Keep Up with Vanessa, Spread the
Word, Learn More About Her Passions





VANESSA HERE!!!

I'm Vanessa Riley, and I'm beyond excited to share a glimpse into my world with you through this Book Club Reader's Guide for "A Gamble at Sunset." As an author, I'm passionate about crafting stories that showcase the hidden histories of marginalized communities, celebrating strong sisterhoods, and vibrant multicultural communities.

While my background includes a doctorate in mechanical engineering from Stanford University and contributions to organizations like NASA and GM, my true passion lies in historical fiction, romance, and mystery. With over twenty-five titles to my name and each one being a labor of love, I'm thrilled to welcome you to the captivating series "Betting Against the Duke" and its first title, "A Gamble at Sunset."

Within these pages, you'll find discussion questions to spark meaningful conversations, Spotify playlists curated to enhance your reading experience, behind-the-scenes glimpses into the novel's creation, and some delightful recipes inspired by research or my Trinidadian and Southern roots.

I can't wait for you to immerse yourself in the story of Georgina and Lord Mark, filled with love, redemption, and the timeless allure of Regency romance. Thank you for being a part of this journey with me.

Warm regards,
Vanessa Riley

BEHIND THE SCENES

BEHIND THE SCENES

BEHIND THE SCENES

BEHIND THE SCENES

BEHIND THE



Vanessa Riley, historian and consulting producer, collaborated with designer Kara Saun and celebrity stylist Kim Kimble on the Hallmark period film for *Sense and Sensibility*. Together, they ensured period accuracy and included the true history of Black and People of Color during the Regency and Georgian eras in the film.



VANESSARILEY.COM

VANESSARILEY.COM

VANESSARILEY.COM

Such a thrill to be an extra in *Sense and Sensibility*! Here's a moment captured with the talented actor Victor Hugo, who plays John Willoughby. #SenseAndSensibility #ExtraLife

"Lost in the magic of books! Here are some of my favorite reads from last year. 📖✨ #BookLover #ReadingIsMagic

Capture your favorite books or those from last year in a photo! Tweet, post on IG, or share however you like. Tag me if I'm among your favorites. Find my social handles on the last page of the guide. Happy reading! 📖✨ #BookLovers



BEHIND THE SCENES

BEHIND THE SCENES

BEHIND THE SCENES

BEHIND THE SCENES

BEHIND THE

READING CHECKLIST

Reader Year

Book Title	Start	Middle	Finished	Rate
	✓			

BOOK CLUB QUESTIONS

****Character Dynamics and Relationships:****

1. How does the Friends to Lovers trope manifest in the relationship between Georgina and Lord Mark? Do you find their transition from friendship to romance believable?
2. Discuss the dynamics between the Duke of Torrance and the Wilcox sisters. How do his actions and motivations shape his relationships with Georgina and her sisters?
3. Explore the theme of instant love in the novel, particularly in Georgina's impulsive actions and the consequences that follow. How does this theme add to the complexity of the story?
4. How does the Pygmalion trope play out in Georgina and Lord Mark's fake courtship? What challenges do they face as they navigate their fabricated relationship?
5. Consider the trope of Lovers from across the tracks in the context of Georgina and Lord Mark's social and economic backgrounds. How does this trope impact their relationship and the obstacles they must overcome?

VANESSA ON SET IN
A BULGARIAN CASTLE



BOOK CLUB QUESTIONS

****Themes and Messages:****

6. Reflect on the themes of love, redemption, and second chances in "A Gamble at Sunset." How are these themes explored throughout the story?
7. Discuss the portrayal of family dynamics, secrets, and forgiveness in the novel. How do these themes contribute to the overall narrative and character development?
8. How does the setting of 1816 Regency England influence the themes and messages conveyed in the story?
9. Explore the theme of resilience in the face of societal expectations and challenges. How do characters like Georgina and Lord Mark demonstrate resilience in pursuing their goals and desires?

****Plot and Narrative:****

10. What role does the bet between the Duke of Torrance and the Viscountess play in driving the plot forward? How does it impact the characters' decisions and actions?
11. Discuss the significance of music and talent in the story, particularly in Georgina's singing genius and Lord Mark's pursuit of the Harlbert's Prize for music.
12. Analyze the role of gossip, scandal, and societal judgment in the narrative. How do these elements add tension and conflict to the story?
13. Explore the challenges faced by characters in maintaining their facades and dealing with the consequences of their actions. How do they navigate the complexities of deception and authenticity?

****Character Development and Growth:****

14. How do characters like Georgina, Lord Mark, and the Duke of Torrance evolve and grow throughout the story? What challenges do they face in their personal journeys?
 15. Reflect on Georgina's character arc, from a wallflower with hidden talents to a confident and skilled musician. How does her journey of self-discovery impact the narrative?
 16. Discuss the motivations and internal conflicts of characters like Katherine, the Viscountess, and their roles in the story's progression.
 17. How does the theme of healing and reconciliation manifest in the relationships between characters, particularly in the context of past misunderstandings and betrayals?
- ompares to other Regency romance novels you've read? What sets it apart, and what elements do you think will resonate with readers?

BOOK CLUB QUESTIONS

****Author's Style and Craft:****

18. How does Vanessa Riley's writing style contribute to the overall atmosphere and tone of the novel?
19. Discuss the author's approach to historical accuracy and representation in the Regency era setting. What aspects of the historical backdrop stood out to you?
20. How does Riley balance romance, drama, and societal commentary in the narrative? What impact does this balance have on the reader's engagement with the story?

****Reader Expectations and Reception:****

21. What were your initial expectations for the book, and how did they align with your reading experience?
22. Reflect on the pacing and structure of the novel. Did you find the plot developments and revelations satisfying and well-paced?
23. How did the various tropes used in the story enhance or detract from your enjoyment of the book?
24. Consider the ending of "A Gamble at Sunset." Did it meet your expectations, and were you left wanting more from the series?

****Impact and Relevance:****

25. Reflect on the broader societal issues and themes addressed in the novel, such as sexism, social class dynamics, and the power of art and talent. How do these themes resonate with contemporary discussions and relevance?
26. Discuss the representation of diverse characters and perspectives in the story. How does Riley incorporate diversity and inclusivity in her storytelling?
27. Consider the messages and takeaways from the novel regarding love, forgiveness, and the pursuit of dreams. What insights or lessons did you gain from the story?
28. How do you think "A Gamble at Sunset" compares to other Regency romance novels you've read? What sets it apart, and what elements do you think will resonate with readers?

****Anticipation for Future Books:****

29. Based on your experience with "A Gamble at Sunset," what are your expectations and hopes for the subsequent books in the trilogy?
30. What unresolved plot points, character arcs, or thematic threads from the first book do you look forward to seeing explored or resolved in the sequels?

Feel free to use these questions to guide your book club discussions and delve deeper into the themes, characters, and storytelling elements of "A Gamble at Sunset" by Vanessa Riley.

[illegible]

Moody Joyful Fun Healing

PLAYLISTS

01

THE SONG LIST FOR A GAMBLE AT SUNSET

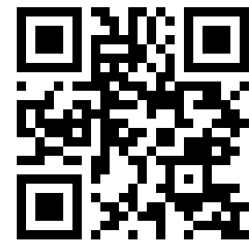
<https://spoti.fi/3PrOOXz>



02

SISTERHOOD SONGS

<https://spoti.fi/3TEqRnb>



03

I WANT BE A BETTER VERSION OF ME FOR YOU MELODIES

<https://spoti.fi/3llyseu>



04

TUNES FOR FRIENDS FALLING IN LOVE

<https://spoti.fi/3v3YwgY>



Welcome to four specially curated song playlists just for you! Dive into the romantic melodies of 'A Gamble at Sunset,' celebrate the power of sisterhoods with uplifting tunes, find inspiration for personal growth through music, and enjoy the heartwarming melodies of friends falling in love. Get ready to immerse yourself in a world of captivating songs and unforgettable emotions across these curated playlists!

RECIPE FUN

Georgina's Ginger Biscuits or Cornish Fairings

You should love this crisp, tender biscuits (cookies).

Ingredients

1 eggs

1/2 cup of butter (use very high-quality butter)

1 cup of castor sugar (or 1 cup and 1 tablespoon of granulated sugar)

2 1/2 cups sifted self-rising flour (Sift, then measure, you need the flour aerated)

1 teaspoon baking powder (also called bicarbonate of soda)

2 tsp. ground ginger (or 1 tsp. ground ginger and 1 tsp. of fresh finely grated ginger)

2 tbsp. Lyle's Golden Syrup (or 2 tbsp. of Honey)

Line a cookie sheet with parchment paper.

Melt syrup and butter in a pan over low heat. Stir, then set aside.

Add the flour and ginger into a large bowl, and then stir in the sugar. Once everything is incorporated, add in the syrup and butter mixture. Stir well and set aside.

Whisk an egg with the soda. When it is well incorporated, add it to the flour butter mixture. Stir everything together until you have a nice dough. Wrap the dough and put it into the refrigerator for 10 minutes.

Flour a board to roll out the biscuits. Take the unwrapped dough and roll it until it's less than 1/3 to a 1/2 of an inch thick. Cut biscuits out. I like 3-inch circles.

Place biscuits on parchment paper and bake for 8 to 10 minutes at 350°F.

Like Mark, keep an eye on the biscuits, so they don't burn or overcook.

Take out the biscuits and cool them on parchment paper over a wire rack.



RECIPE FUN

Patience's Coconut Bread (From A Duke, The Lady, And A Baby)

Busick and his men fell in love with Patience's coconut bread, and I thought you might want to know how to make it, too. In parenthesis below are suggestions on how to lighten or make the bread a smidge healthier.

For the Bread

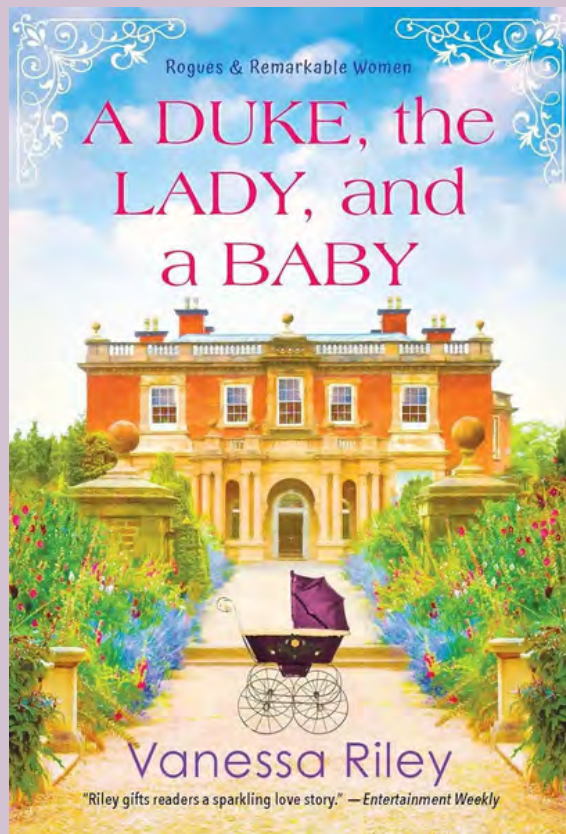
- 3 cups all-purpose flour, spooned into measuring cup and leveled-off with a knife
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 sticks unsalted butter or (softened 1 butter stick and 1/2 grape seed oil)
- 2-1/4 cups granulated sugar
- 3 large eggs or (2 eggs and 1 egg white)
- 1 cup (low fat) buttermilk
- 1/2 cup toasted finely chopped coconut. To make, take shredded coconut and bake for 10 minutes at 300 degrees. Coconut toasts fast so be aware and stir.
- 4 teaspoons fresh lemon juice
- 4 teaspoons coconut extract

For the Syrup

- 1/3 cup water
- 1/3 cup granulated sugar
- 4 teaspoons fresh lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons coconut extract

For the Glaze (Optional)

- 1 cup confectioners' sugar
- 4 teaspoons fresh lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons coconut extract
- 1/2 teaspoon toasted finely chopped coconut, packed
- 1 teaspoon unsalted butter, melted



Instructions

1. Set the oven rack to the middle and preheat to 325°F
2. Spray two 8 inch x 4-inch loaf pans with non-stick cooking spray and dust with flour.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk or sift together the flour, baking soda and salt. Then set aside.
4. In another bowl cream the butter and sugar until light and fluffy, typically 3-4 minutes at medium speed. Scrape down the sides of the bowl. Beat in the whole eggs one at a time, (and then the egg white if following the lighter recipe). Beat well after each addition.
5. Scrape down the sides of the bowl again.
6. In another bowl (yes, we are up to 3 bowls), combine the buttermilk, coconut, coconut extract and lemon juice.
7. Turn the mixer to low speed, Beat in one-quarter of the flour mixture, then one-third of the buttermilk mixture.
8. Repeat. Beat in another quarter of the flour and another third of the milk mixture.
9. Repeat. Beat in another quarter of the flour and the remaining milk mixture.
10. Beat in the remaining flour mixture, then scrape down the sides of the bowl.
11. With a wooden spoon, give the batter a quick stir to make sure all of the ingredients are well mixed.
12. Spoon the thick batter into the greased and floured loaf pans and smooth with a spatula. Bake for 50-55 minutes, or until a toothpick comes out clean. Start checking after 45 minutes.
13. Cool the loaves in the pan for ten minutes on a rack.
14. Make the syrup. Combine the water and sugar in a saucepan and bring to a boil. Remove from the heat and stir in the lemon juice, coconut extract, coconut.
15. Invert loaves onto a rack.
16. Slip a large piece of parchment paper under the rack to catch all the drips from the syrup.
17. Gradually brush the hot syrup over each loaf and the sides, letting it soak in. Take your time. Do not rush. Repeat several times.
18. Allow loaves to cool completely. Typically, about one hour is required.
19. When loaves are cool, transfer to serving platters.
20. To make the glaze: combine the confectioners' sugar, lemon juice, coconut, coconut extract and melted butter in a medium bowl, mixing with a fork until smooth. Add more sugar or lemon juice as necessary to make a thick but pourable glaze. The glaze should have the consistency of thick honey. Spoon the glaze over the top of each loaf.
21. Cut a slice and eat.

HOW TO HELP

1. Just finished the captivating #GambleAtSunset by #VanessaRiley, Georgina and Lord Mark's romance is enchanting! #BettingOnTheDuke
2. Lost in the magical world of #GambleAtSunset by #VanessaRiley, such a beautifully written Regency romance! #BettingOnTheDuke
3. Currently immersed in the delightful #GambleAtSunset by #VanessaRiley, Georgina and Lord Mark's chemistry is palpable! #BettingOnTheDuke
4. Added #GambleAtSunset by #VanessaRiley to my favorite Regency romances, Georgina's journey is inspiring! #BettingOnTheDuke
5. A must-read! Just finished #GambleAtSunset by #VanessaRiley, can't wait for the next book in the series! #BettingOnTheDuke

VANESSA ON A WRITING RETREAT
IN KINGSTON, JAMAICA



Connect With Me

SOICAL MEDIA & MORE



Connect with me and join the conversation:

Website: <https://vanessariley.com>

Instagram:

<https://www.instagram.com/vanessarileyauthor/>



TikTok: <https://www.tiktok.com/@vanessarileyauthor>

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/VanessaRileyAuthor>

Twitter or X: <https://www.twitter.com/VanessaRiley>



Pinterest: <http://pinterest.com/regencymaid>

Feel free to reach out and share your thoughts! You can send me questions directly or even request a book club Zoom with Vanessa if time permits at <https://bit.ly/contactVanessaRiley>.



A full list of Vanessa's books can be found at <https://bit.ly/VRbooks>.

Let's connect and dive deeper into the world of books together.

MORE INFORMATION ON SICKLE CELL ANEMIA



Sickle Cell Anemia Awareness: A Cause Worth Supporting

Sickle Cell Anemia is a genetic disorder that has deeply impacted my family and close friends. Much like Tay-Sachs, it's a recessive genetic disorder that predominantly affects Black communities globally. The statistics are staggering; the American Sickle Cell Anemia Association reports that 1 in 365 African American babies are born with the disease, and 1 in 12 carry the trait. These numbers highlight the urgent need for awareness and support.

Join me in honoring those battling Sickle Cell Anemia every day. Here are three organizations leading the charge in research and support:

1. American Sickle Cell Anemia Association
2. St. Jude Children's Research Hospital - Sickle Cell Disease Treatment
3. Sickle Cell Disease Association of America, Inc.

Let's come together to raise awareness and work towards eradicating this ancient disease.

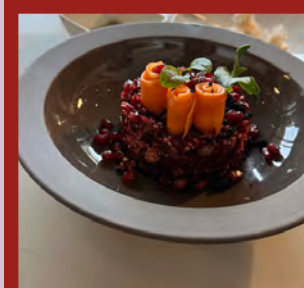
VANESSA'S QUOTE FOR TODAY

STAY FOCUSED



BOOKSTORE FUN

AND CELEBRATE YOUR JOURNEY! YOU ARE WORTHY!



COOKING & PORCH FUN

OPENING CREDITS & CAMEO IN
SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Other Books By Vanessa Riley

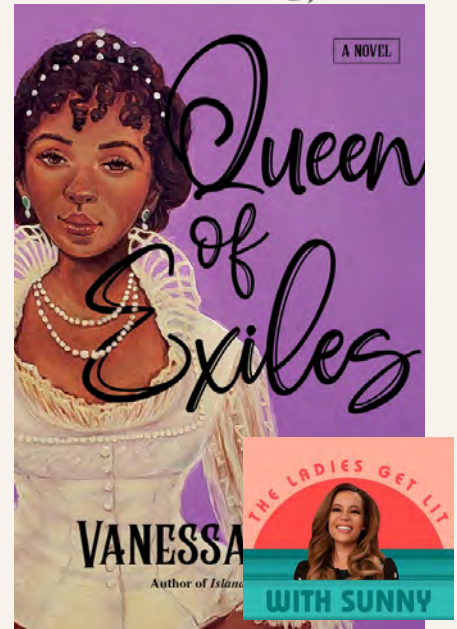
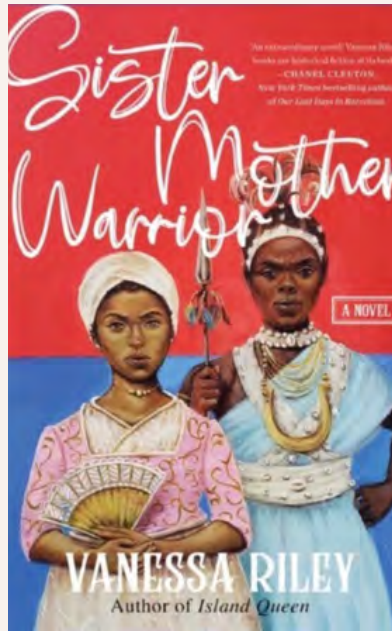
HISTORICAL FICTION ABOUT REAL WOMEN

Entertainment

CNN

ESSENCE

The New York Times



HISTORICAL MYSTERIES

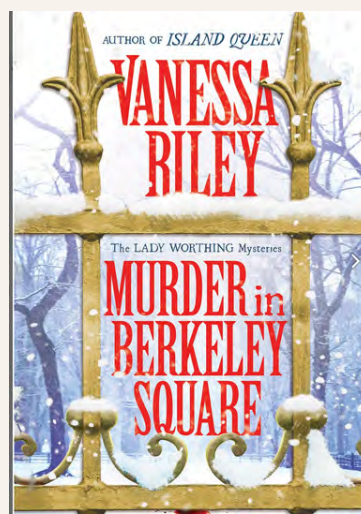
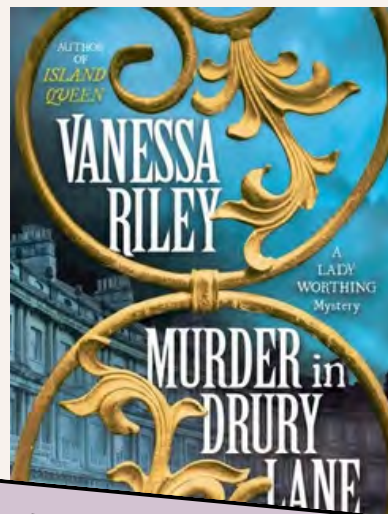
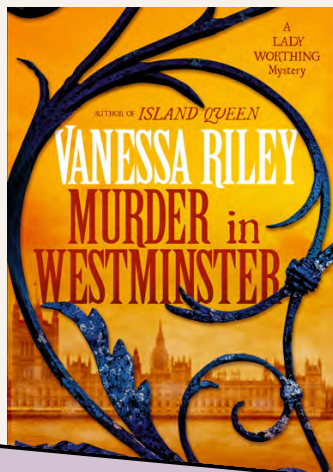
GOOD
MORNING
AMERICA

LJ
LIBRARY
JOURNAL

KIRKUS

THE ROOT

TODAY



[HTTPS://BIT.LY/VRBOOKS](https://bit.ly/vrbooks)

[HTTPS://BIT.LY/VRBOOKS](https://bit.ly/vrbooks)

[HTTPS://BIT.LY/VRBOOKS](https://bit.ly/vrbooks)

[HTTPS://BIT.LY/VRBOOKS](https://bit.ly/vrbooks)

[HTTPS://BIT.LY/VRBOOKS](https://bit.ly/vrbooks)

[HTTPS://BIT.LY/VRBOOKS](https://bit.ly/vrbooks)