

The Face by Angela Hunt

DISCUSSION GUIDE for Christian book clubs



1. As you will discover if you search the Internet for research on brain printing, Spanish poppy production, lie detection, CIA black sites, and propranolol (the trauma drug), most of the concepts featured in this novel are quite real. (The legitimate enterprise of Saluda is based on an actual company; the criminal enterprise, however, is fictional.) Did some of these concepts seem far-fetched as you read the story? Does knowing that these ideas come from actual situations change any aspect of your worldview?

2. Like many of Angela Hunt's books, *The Face* is an allegory—elements of the story correspond to spiritual truths. Was the allegory obvious to you as you were first reading the novel? What spiritual truths do you think the author was trying to portray?

3. When Sarah first learns that she has an aunt, she says:

I have family . . . an aunt, a woman who knows who I am. If this is true, then this woman knows more about me than I know about myself. She knows where I have come from, who my mother was. She knows my father.

Maybe she knows why I am here.

How does Sarah's yearning to know her aunt reflect the yearning most people feel to know the God who created them?

4. When Renee and Sarah first meet, Sarah says she doesn't feel that she's missed out on much by growing up at the isolated convent. Renee realizes that Sarah has no idea that she's missed everything.

How is this analogous to people who live lives apart from God? What are they missing . . . while they don't even realize they're missing it? How is God's yearning for them like Renee's yearning to know her niece?

5. When Dr. Kollman first meets Sarah, he tells her, "You won't be stealing anything—you need to consider the donation a gift. And you won't look like the donor when we're done—you'll look like the woman you were meant to be."

How does this relate to our new "appearance" after we accept Christ?

6. When she's dreaming of the perfect face, Sarah thinks *I don't want to be breathtakingly gorgeous; I wouldn't know how to handle perfection.*

Would you want to have a perfect face? How would your life change if you had the world's definition of perfect beauty?

Think about perfection in spiritual terms. Will we ever reach a state of perfection in earthly life? Why or why not? Why do you think God allows life to be imperfect?

7. When Sarah confesses her feelings for Dr. Kollman and finds they are not reciprocated, she thinks: *He doesn't love me because he can't love me. He has seen me at my ugliest and most misshapen. Even if I look like Miss America by this time next year, he will never be able to forget what I truly am.*

Now . . . consider how Christ sees us before and after our being made new in his image. Does he remember how ugly our sinful lives were? How does he see us?

8. Renee says that that one of her friends believes that “evil can't find you if it's never heard your name.” Do you agree or disagree with this bit of unconventional wisdom?

9. One of the characters is a Christ figure—who, and in what way?

10. What do you think about the idea of memory implantation? The information about the “trauma drug” is true. If you could remove unpleasant emotion from some of the past events in your life, would you? Should Sarah have opted to give herself new memories? Would you?

Why do you think God allows his children to suffer? What is the role of suffering in our lives?

11. First Corinthians 13:12-13 reads: “For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”

Because she had no way to communicate certain emotions, Sarah's experience of them was limited. How was her new face like the new body that awaits Christians? What things might we experience in eternity that we cannot experience in our mortal lifetimes?

12. Think for a moment about the characters in this book: which women truly had "no faces"—no emotional involvement with the people around them? Who came to have emotional involvement?

13. In John 20:29, we read these words of Jesus as he spoke to Thomas: "You believe because you have seen me. Blessed are those who believe without seeing me."

If people could see the actual face of Christ, would they be more likely to believe? Why did Jesus say that those who have not seen are more blessed? Do you think it's significant that history has not left us with any definite representations of Christ's face?

14. At the conclusion of the story, Dr. Kollman gives Renee an overlooked collection of letters. Renee says: *I hug the parcel to my chest as a feeling of glorious anticipation fills my heart. I know what I'll find in these pages because I know my aunt. She would have written that she is looking forward to seeing me, that she wants to tell me about my father, that she longs for the day when we can sit and talk . . .*

In terms of the analogy, what could the letters represent for a Christian?



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