

Holly Furtick Book Club

March 31, 2020 - 8:00PM

Call Your Daughter Home by Deb Spera

Opening Questions

- What are you reading this week?
- I am not reading as much as I would like to.
 - A Woman is No Man by Etaf Rum
 - Summer of 69 by Elin Hildebrand
 - I Was Anastasia by Ariel Lawhon
 - The Choice by Dr. Edith Eger

About the Author

- Born in Kentucky to teenagers
- Incessant reader as a child
- She was an executive at Showtime
- She wrote a novella of short stories just as a hobby to check off her bucket list, and that first story became this book.

About the Book

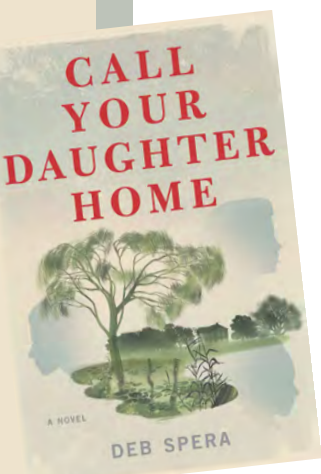
- A friend of mine who always recommends the best books said to me, "Have you read 'Call Your Daughter Home??' It's soooo good!" There is nothing better than a good book recommendation from a friend.
- The book takes place in The Great Depression in the lowcountry of South Carolina, which has suffered a boll weevil outbreak that has destroyed all their crops. And we find these three women who are so different, but their lives intersect and they need each other.

Setting

I don't always talk about the setting but the LowCountry of SC is like home to me. My husband is from Moncks Corner, but his mother, Faith, is the daughter of a Methodist minister who lived in many of the towns in the lowcountry. I asked her to describe the area...

- Branchville is your small, blink your eye & you go through it, 1 stoplight town (maybe two). The railroad track ran through the center. Like all small Southern towns — Southern class dividers were alive & well even in my teenage years. Think of your town — people with the pretty, white Victorian style homes with big porches or your poor dirt farmers. Riding through, I still like to recall what were once "grand homes."

- You know how I am about the LowCountry:) It just has a slowness & ease that settles my spirit. It even has a certain smell. You still refer to your elders as Mrs. Jane or Mr. Jim, even if you're 45 years old, yes mam & no mam...niceties are still taught & expected. Funerals are still considered a social event, & we still pull over on the side of the road for a funeral procession going by...there is no race when paying respect to the dead...and you know, you'd still better at least say hello in the LowCountry.



Themes

- Economic depression
- Abuse
- Motherhood
- Mentoring
- The power of women who can support each other from different ethnic and economical backgrounds
- Diphtheria Outbreak- they had to close the sewing circle. Diphtheria is a bacteria that is highly contagious and had a 50% death rate before treatment was available.
- I loved the light and darkness in this book. I loved how the right people died. Obviously the evil men, but also, Rhetta, most people's favorite, dies but she dies sacrificially and you wanted her to be with her daughter and husband.

Main Characters

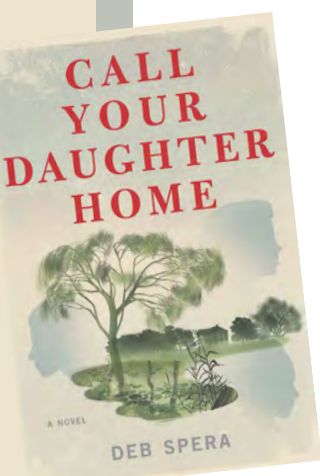
- Gertrude —middle age, mother of four, married to an abusive drunk who she kills in the opening scene. Her husband is/was Alvin
- Annie —older woman whose husband, Edwin is very powerful in their town. Annie was wealthy before she married. She has her own business where she employs the women in town in a sewing circle. We find out that her daughters moved away and refused to speak to her, one son committed suicide at age 12, and one son has a stutter and is starting a men's line from her sewing circle, and one son works for her husband. Annie is blind.
- Retta —The first free person in her family, works for the family that owned her family. Retta is married to Odell, and you love these two characters. Retta represents hope and optimism yet she has lived such a hard life. She had one daughter who died. Retta sees.

Favorite Scenes

- Title scene... the birth when Retta says "call your daughter home"
- Camp meeting — From Faith
 - *The Camp Meetings were originated by the Methodist Denomination. I went to Indian Field right outside of St. George. It always ends on the 1st Sunday of October. There is also a Cypress Camp Meeting later in the Lebanon Community. Both consist of wooden "tents" situated in a large circle with a big covered Tabernacle in the center, where services are held throughout the day for a week. The tents have been handed down in families & even today, families come together & live in the "tents" for that week. Meals with everything imaginable are a big thing & are still, in large part, cooked on the wood-burning oven at each "tent." Those are the 2 White Camp Meetings. There is a Black Camp Meeting, too. Isn't there one in the book also?*
 - *When I was in high school, school actually closed 2 or 3 days for Camp Meeting. I always stayed with Becky in her family's tent. Never lived in Branchville. When I was in HS, Harleyville (where I lived), St. George, & Branchville had dances to raise money for our proms. We would not have them on the same night, so we could get around to each other's.*

Questions to discuss

- What is this pudding??????



- Did you like the title?
- Why do you think Retta helps Gertrude?
- Do you think Annie really didn't know what was going on in her own house? How did you feel about Annie's hunger strike?
- Which of the three leading ladies do you resonate with the most?
- What is being passed on from woman to woman in this book? I love the support system they develop.
- Did you like the ending?

Questions for Deb

- Thank you for coming to our book club!
- Why South Carolina?
- Why this story?
- *I heard you say in an interview that character drives story, not story drives character. Tell us about who these women are to you. Which character did you miss the most when the book was finally finished?
- *Talk about the title. How it came to be? "the theme is in the center!!"
- What made you leave production and write a book?
- What was the biggest obstacle you faced when writing the book?
- Can you read the first couple paragraphs of the book?
- Can you talk about Annie? Do you think she knew but just refused to believe?
- What are a few of your favorite books?
- Tell us about the mockingbird that visited you while writing this book.
- What are you writing next?

Officially Join This Book Club!

- Go to hollyfurtick.com
- Will post a swipe up after!

Book Club Items for Sale

Visit Hollyfurtick.com!

- Mug - \$10
- TShirt - \$20
- Keychain - \$5
- Pouch - \$10
- Ornament - \$10

Next Book Club

The Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane by Lisa See

May 5th - 8PM EST

Lisa will be joining us!

