

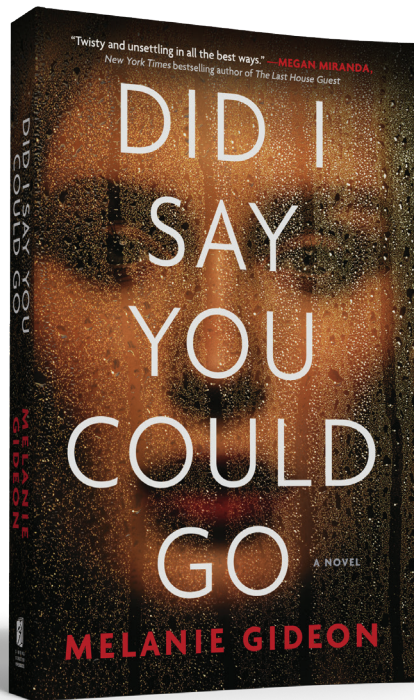
"Twisty and unsettling in all the best ways." —**MEGAN MIRANDA**,
New York Times bestselling author of *The Last House Guest*

A READING GROUP GUIDE FOR

DID I
SAY
YOU
COULD
GO

A NOVEL

MELANIE GIDEON



A suspenseful, gripping novel about families and friendships torn apart at the seams by obsession, secrets, and betrayal with relentless twists and turns that hurtle forward to a shocking confrontation.

When Ruth, a wealthy divorcée, offers to host the Hillside Academy kindergarten meet-and-greet, she hopes this will be a fresh start for her and her introverted daughter, Marley. Finally, they'll be accepted into a tribe. Marley will make friends and Ruth will be welcomed by the mothers. Instead, the parents are turned off by Ruth's ostentatious wealth and before kindergarten even begins, Ruth and Marley are outcasts.

The last guest to arrive at the meet-and-greet is Gemma, a widow and a single mother to her daughter, Bee. Ruth sets her sights on the mother-daughter duo, and soon the two families are inseparable. Ruth takes Gemma and Bee on Aspen vacations, offers VIP passes to Cirque du Soleil, and pays for dinners at Michelin-starred restaurants. For Gemma, who lives paycheck to paycheck, Ruth's largesse is seductive, but as the years go by, she can't shake the feeling that she's accruing an increasingly unpayable debt. When Ruth's affair with a married Hillside dad is exposed, and she's publicly shunned, Gemma uses it to sever ties with Ruth.

Six years later, when Gemma finds herself embroiled in a scandal of her own—Ruth comes to her defense. Their renewed friendship rehabilitates their reputations, but once again, Gemma starts to feel trapped as Ruth grows more and more obsessed with their relationship.

A relentless page-turner, *Did I Say You Could Go* is the story of friendships steeped in lies and duplicity. It's about two families who, when pushed to extremes, cross the line with devastating results.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do you think first drew Ruth and Gemma together as friends? What about their life experiences up to that point make them connect?
2. When Ruth first met Gemma, Ruth thinks of Gemma as “a lottery prize, just waiting to be claimed.” What do you think she meant by that? In what other ways does Ruth objectify the people in her life?
3. When Ruth and Gemma reconnect, Gemma is going through a professional crisis. What about Gemma's predicament makes Ruth want to spring to her defense and help her? What do you think she gains from helping Gemma?

4. Why do you think Gemma was more accepted and popular amongst their mom group? What do you think Ruth could have done differently to fit in? What are your thoughts on the politics of mom groups?
5. How does Ruth's upbringing affect her desire to be accepted and liked by the other moms? In what ways has it shaped her personality and the ways she treats her loved ones?
6. There are many similarities in Ruth and Gemma's friendship and that of Bee and Marley's. In what ways do each depend on the other? And in what ways do each manipulate the other? Discuss the power dynamics between the two friendships.
7. In what ways do the actions of the moms in *Momonymous* mirror those of teens on social media? Can you speak to your own experiences (good or bad) with social media in an increasingly digital world?
8. Gemma and Ruth each slightly judge the other's parenting styles but each thinks they're doing the best for their daughter. Compare and contrast Gemma and Ruth's parenting styles. Have you ever experienced mom-shaming yourself?
9. At one point, Ruth says to Marley "you must be careful about giving too much of yourself. People will take. They'll take and take and then you'll find yourself with nothing." Coming from a woman who seems to have it all, what do you think she meant by what she said to Marley?
10. Ruth reminisces about being the center of attention when she used to have dinner with her parents. But when her friend's daughter Bee becomes the center of attention during dinner, she snaps at her. In what ways do you think Bee reminds Ruth of herself?



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

MELANIE GIDEON is the bestselling author of the novels, *Valley of the Moon* and *Wife 22*, as well as the memoir *The Slippery Year: A Meditation on Happily Ever After*. Her books have been translated into thirty-one languages. *Wife 22* is currently in development. She has written for *The New York Times*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *The Times* (London), the *Daily Mail* (London), and other publications. She was born and raised in Rhode Island and now lives in the Bay Area.