

## **Book Club Notes for *Fishing for Stars* by Bryce Courtenay**

### **Book Summary**

My book *Fishing for Stars* has, at its heart, two passionate, unforgettable – but very different – women. One is exotic, damaged, and shrewd; the other beautiful, determined and zealous. Both are bitter rivals for the love of the same man.

My story is set in Australia, the Pacific Islands, Japan and Indonesia during the latter half of the twentieth century. Nick Duncan is an ingenuous male with a great deal more female on his hands than he can possibly hope to understand.

The contest he is called upon to referee is the clash between the two great loves of his life: the seductive Anna Til, and the older, equally fascinating Marg Hamilton. Nick struggles between their worlds: one exploiting the world's riches for profit, the other fighting to save the environment and its creatures, large and small.

I hope you like *Fishing for Stars* – it is a story of ambition, destruction, love, tears and laughter, with a soupçon of hope thrown in.

Sincerely,  
Bryce Courtenay.

### **About the Author**

Bryce Courtenay is the bestselling author of *The Power of One*, *Tandia*, *April Fool's Day*, *The Potato Factory*, *Tommo & Hawk*, *Solomon's Song*, *Jessica*, *A Recipe for Dreaming*, *The Family Frying Pan*, *The Night Country*, *Smokey Joe's Cafe*, *Four Fires*, *Matthew Flinders' Cat*, *Brother Fish*, *Whitethorn*, *Sylvia*, *The Persimmon Tree* and *Fishing for Stars*.

*The Power of One* is also available in an edition for younger readers, and *Jessica* has been made into an award-winning television miniseries.

Bryce Courtenay lives in the Hunter Valley, New South Wales.

### **Book Club Discussion Questions**

1. What is the inspiration behind the title of *Fishing for Stars*?
2. Nick Duncan is seduced into very different worlds by the two leading women in his life, one exploiting the world's riches for profit, the other fighting to save the environment. To which world, ultimately, is he most attracted?
3. The women of *Fishing for Stars* – Anna, Marg and Miss Sparkle – all subvert traditional notions of womanhood and femininity to various degrees. Discuss the representation of women in *Fishing for Stars*.
4. Nick's love is split between two women. How realistic is this?
5. Uncle Joe's scholarships were designed to help the people of the Pacific islands become independent and capable citizens. Did Uncle Joe succeed?

6. Nick learns that the relationship between the yakuza and Japanese government and institutions is complex. Is the yakuza a force for good or evil?

7. In *The Persimmon Tree*, Konoe Akira is both Anna's captor and protector.

Discuss her contradictory relationship with him. Why, ultimately, does she seek him out?

8. Is civil disobedience ever justified in protests such as the Lake Pedder or the Franklin Gordon protests? Why?

9. At the novel's end, Nick sees a picture of Anna wearing Marg's Frog earrings.

How do you imagine the confrontation between Anna and Nick over this might have played out? Do you think Anna could ever do anything that would destroy their relationship?

10. Was Anna's legacy more than just money?