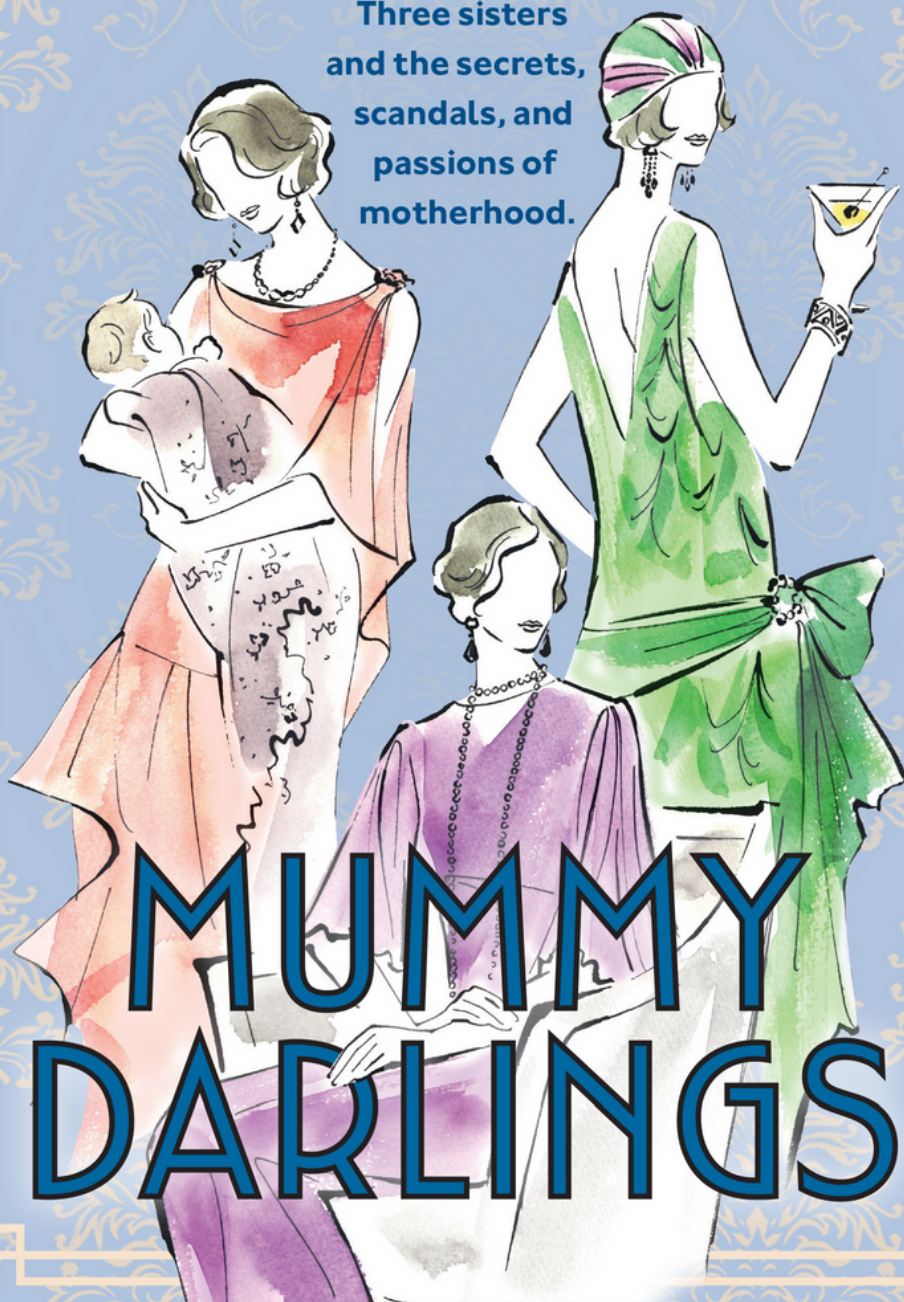


A GLORIOUS GUINNESS GIRLS NOVEL

EMILY HOURICAN

Three sisters  
and the secrets,  
scandals, and  
passions of  
motherhood.



BOOK CLUB KIT

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) The Guinness sisters all bear some type of resentment toward the way they were mothered. What does this tell us about Cloé's values as a mother?
- 2) Which of the Guinness sisters experienced the greatest lifestyle change as a result of starting a family? Why?
- 3) How did the introduction of motherhood highlight the growth of Maureen, Oonagh, and Aileen individually? What does their different motherhood styles tell you about them as people?
- 4) Which part of Maureen's identity did she lose touch with the most, and how does she compensate for that change?

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

5) How does the juxtaposition of the wealthy Guinness family and English commoners depict the class struggle in the mid-1930s?

6) Why do you think the author created Kathleen? What is the significance of her character in the historical context of the book?

7) How do you think the relationship between the sisters and their husbands would be different if they didn't have children?

8) What are the differences in expectations in a marriage among the women in the book? How does this correlate to expectations of marriage in the modern day?


# Q & A

## with EMILY HOURICAN



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**If this book was narrated by one of the sisters, who would you have chosen to lead the plot? Why?**

I'm tempted to say Maureen, because she's the most intelligent and dynamic, and I find her personality the most complex and interesting. But actually, she's too self-centered to make a good narrator. She wouldn't bother filling us in on what her sisters were doing! Oonagh is too sweet and nice about everyone, and not wildly observant. Aileen would be perfect—she has that slightly resentful eye that means she is very quick to notice what others are up to, and is just enough on the fringes of every scene that she has a good, clear vantage point!

**The sisters collectively see marriage and childbearing as the greatest and final milestone. How does this compare to your perception of married life?**

This was one of the things I really wanted to explore in the book. It really is not that long ago that marriage and motherhood were the great and final milestone. Or at least were considered by society to be such. When my mother was having me and my siblings, in the 1970s, Irish law meant she had to give up work as a teacher, because married women were not allowed to work in the public service. It seems incredible now—but that's how it was.



I think an idea like that is so damaging. There are women who want very much to stay at home and bring up their families, and we should champion them in doing so. And then there are women, like me, who would find this very difficult indeed. I cannot imagine being happy in an entirely domestic sphere. And I can only begin to imagine what an unhappy and unfulfilled mother I would have been like for my children.

So with the Guinness Girls, I wanted to look at what this meant for women who accepted it (rich women like the Guinnesses have always had other options, but marriage and motherhood were the most socially acceptable). I don't think it worked well for any of them.

### **Which sister's experience do you relate to the most?**

Something of all of them. Maureen's intense, tempestuous, demanding personality is very unlike mine (probably that's why I find her so fascinating!). And her intense, tempestuous, demanding relationship is also (mercifully!) unlike mine. But I identify with her frustration at the life she has, with the way she wants to see more and do more. Oonagh I am probably more like—certainly she has the kind of nature I understand. She wants life to be easy and pleasant, she adores her children and hopes for happiness in her marriages. But she is far more pliant than me. Meanwhile, Aileen has that observant, slightly outsider quality that is necessary for writers.

### **What was so special about the Guinness sisters that inspired you to write a second book continuing their story? What new pieces of information did you discover that you found most interesting?**

I loved writing the first book, THE GLORIOUS GUINNESS GIRLS so much, and finding out about their early lives and imagining all the many parts that aren't documented. I ended that book with their marriages, but I felt I really couldn't leave them there. The next stage of all their lives was highly eventful. Divorce, affairs, widowhood, more marriages. . . But it was in their capacity as mothers that I found them most compelling.

# A GLORIOUS GUINNESS CAKE

Stun your book club with this positively glorious chocolate cake, fit for a glamorous party hosted by any of the Guinness girls!

## INGREDIENTS

### For the Cake

Butter, for the pan  
1 cup Guinness stout  
10 tablespoons (1 stick plus 2 tablespoons) unsalted butter (see Tip)  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  cup unsweetened cocoa  
2 cups superfine sugar  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  cup sour cream  
2 large eggs  
1 tablespoon vanilla extract  
2 cups all-purpose flour  
2½ teaspoons baking soda

### For the Topping

1¼ cups confectioners' sugar  
8 ounces cream cheese at room temperature  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup heavy cream

## INSTRUCTIONS

### Step 1

For the cake: Heat oven to 350 degrees. Butter a 9-inch springform pan and line with parchment paper. In a large saucepan, combine Guinness and butter. Place over medium-low heat until butter melts, then remove from heat. Add cocoa and superfine sugar, and whisk to blend.

### Step 2

In a small bowl, combine sour cream, eggs and vanilla; mix well. Add to Guinness mixture. Add flour and baking soda, and whisk again until smooth. Pour into buttered pan, and bake until risen and firm, 45 minutes to 1 hour. Place pan on a wire rack and cool completely in pan.

### Step 3

For the topping: Using a food processor or by hand, mix confectioners' sugar to break up lumps. Add cream cheese and blend until smooth. Add heavy cream, and mix until smooth and spreadable.

### Step 4

Remove cake from pan and place on a platter or cake stand. Ice top of cake only, so that it resembles a frothy pint of Guinness.

**Get the**  
**Recipe Here**

\*Recipe by Nigella Lawson,  
posted in the New York Times

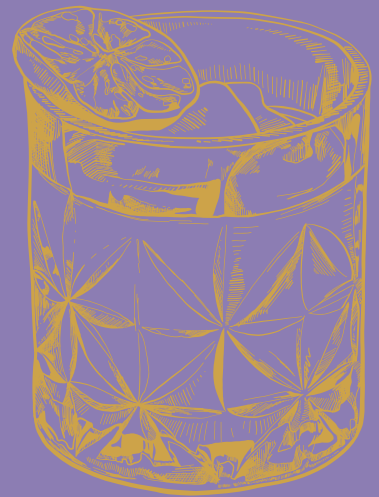
# GUINNESS BLACK MAGIC COCKTAIL

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For something that requires a little less baking and a little more boozing, this Guinness Black Magic cocktail will positively enchant your book club!

## INGREDIENTS

- 4 oz. Guinness Draught
- 4 tbsp. Bourbon
- 2 tsp. Grenadine or sugar syrup
- 1 tbsp. Fresh lime juice
- 5 Fresh blackberries
- Lime wedges to garnish



## INSTRUCTIONS

### Step 1

Combine bourbon, blackberries, sugar syrup, and lime juice in a cocktail shaker. Muddle the blackberry mixture until blackberries are crushed and juicy.

### Step 2

Add ice and shake vigorously to combine juices with other ingredients.

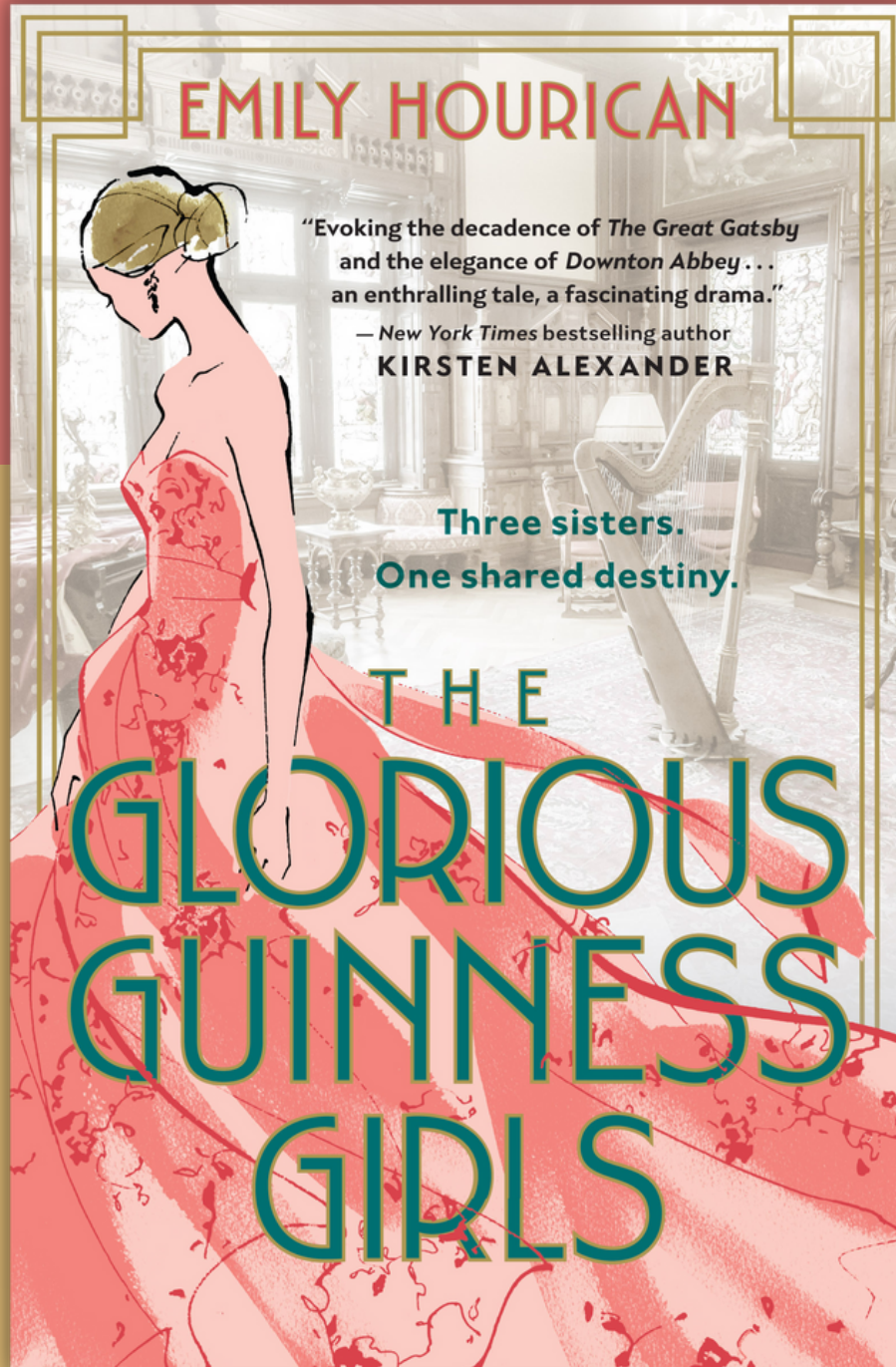
### Step 3

Strain into a glass filled with fresh ice cubes or cracked iced. Stir in Guinness and garnish with a lime wedge.

\*Originally posted on [AdvancedMixology.com](https://www.advancedmixology.com)



AND DON'T MISS THE FIRST  
GUINNESS GIRLS BOOK...



From London to Ireland during the 1920s, this glorious, gripping, and richly textured story takes us to the heart of the remarkable real-life story of the Guinness Girls—perfect for fans of *Downton Abbey* and Julian Fellowes' *Belgravia*.

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