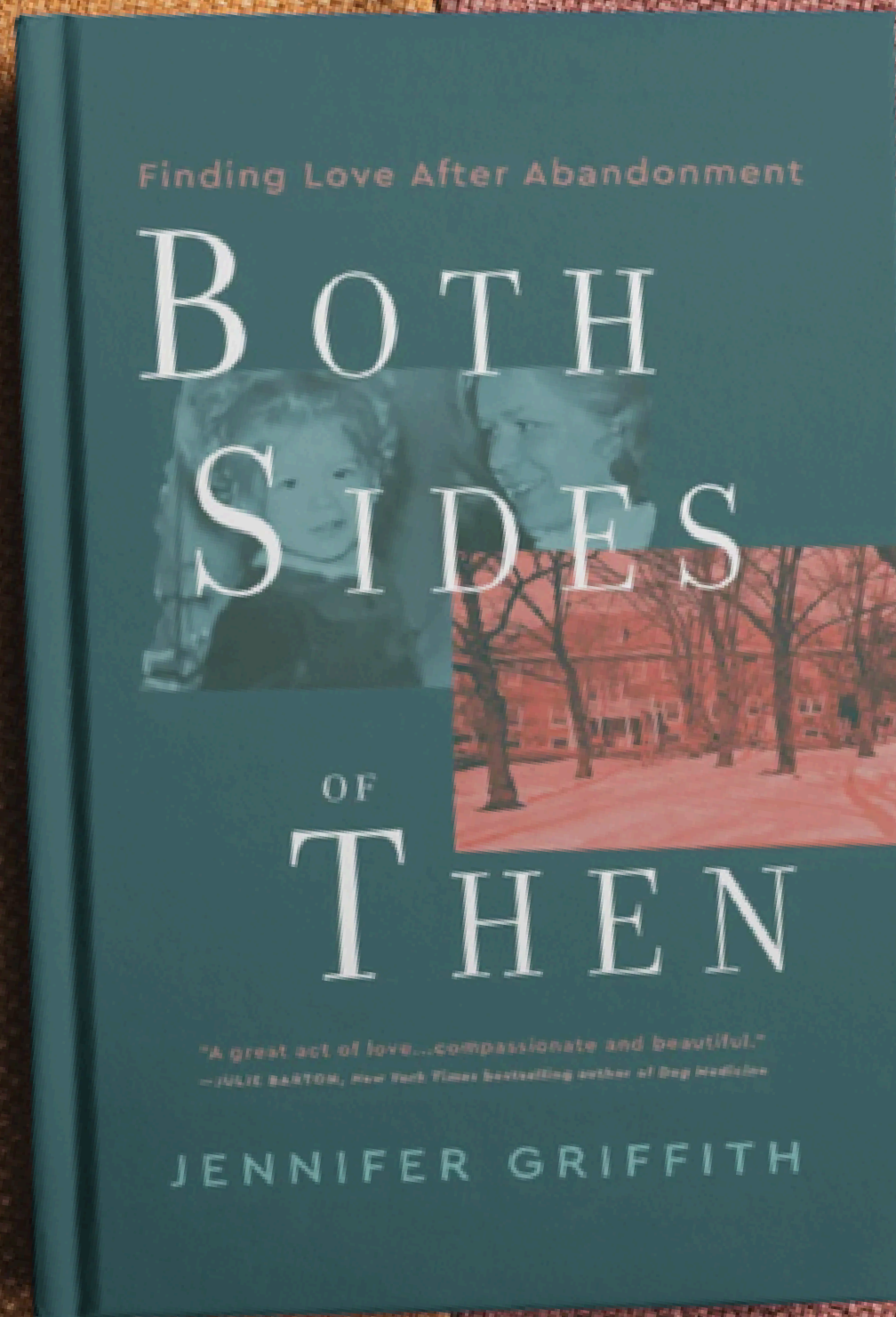


BOTH SIDES OF THEN

BOOK CLUB KIT



A LETTER FROM JENNIFER

Welcome to the *Both Sides of Then* Book Club Kit. I'm honored you're holding my book in your hands — which is why I've created this supplemental guide for your group discussion.

My memoir represents five years of writing and three more of finding the courage, and the publisher, to bring it into the world. But at its heart, it represents a lifetime spent trying to understand my parents, and in the process, understand myself.

Here's the thing about memoir: in the end, the book is never really about the author. It's about shared narratives, self-discovery, and finding hope in the shadows. A memoir about how easy someone's life has been isn't compelling. What resonates is what it takes to move through the trials of an ordinary life and come out still standing.

I structured *Both Sides of Then* as a dual narrative the moment I recognized a universal truth: that who our mothers were before they became our parents shapes who we become, whether we realize it or not.

Thank you for welcoming our voices into your world. As you read this coming-of-age story, I hope you begin to see yourself in these pages — to relate to some of our struggles, as well as our triumphs. I hope this book and kit sparks questions you may never have considered before. But more than anything, I hope you realize we all have a story to tell — and that each one matters.



XOJ

BOTH SIDES OF THEN

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

01

The chapters alternate between Anna and Jennifer's perspectives. Which voice drew you in more, and did that change as you read?

03

What did you know about pre-Roe maternity homes before reading? What surprised you most about what Anna and the women experienced?

02

Music plays a large role in the growth of Anna and Jennifer. What did the piano give Anna that people couldn't? Why do you think Jennifer eventually stopped playing the instrument?

04

What does Anna's handling of Ginger's death reveal about how she learned to cope with loss? What did it teach Jennifer about grief?



BOTH SIDES OF THEN

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

05

Jennifer's father says he wants to leave the family, but then he stays. Jennifer believes it would have been better if he'd left, but Anna disagrees. Whose view do you lean toward, and why?

07

While volunteering at an orphanage in Brazil, Jennifer realizes the children there were stuck, and she wasn't. How did that trip change how she saw her mother's story and her own choices?

06

Jennifer's rebellion and her eating disorder unfold while the adults around her are absorbed in their own crises. Where did you see her searching for control or safety she couldn't find at home? Did she eventually find it, and when?

08

Days before he dies, Jennifer's father reveals the secret behind the year he wanted to leave. How did that change your reading of Jennifer's adolescence, and of him?



BOTH SIDES OF THEN

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

09

By the end, Jennifer says she no longer needs her mother to see her perspective. What does acceptance look like in this family? Is it the same as reconciliation?

10

The book closes with Anna playing with Drake: "They are a connection made, a chain broken." What was broken, and what was made? Can one generation really break a cycle?

11

If you could sit with your mother or grandmother the way Jennifer sat with Eve over wine, what's the one question you would ask?

12

Jennifer relies on the belief that trauma unaddressed is trauma transferred. Do you agree? What stories were handed down in your family, and which ones were kept quiet?



HISTORICAL REFERENCES

BAPTIST ORPHANAGE

PHILADELPHIA, PA

Founded in 1879, the Baptist Orphanage cared for Philadelphia children before the modern foster care system existed. While there were plenty of orphaned children without any legal guardian, many did have a living parent who couldn't care for them, whether due to poverty, illness, widowhood, or other hardship. Its early rules required families to sign over full legal control, and children grew up under strict routines and daily religious instruction.

By the 1970s, institutions like the Baptist Orphanage were largely replaced by community group homes for families and family preservation programs from the Department of Human Services.



THE RANGNOW CHILDREN AT THE ORPHANAGE (BOTTOM LEFT TO RIGHT) JIM, EVE, JOHN, HOWARD, AND ANNA



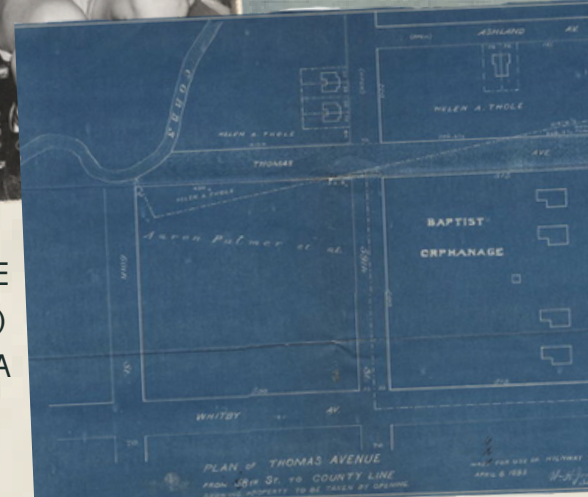
Twenty-third Annual Report

BAPTIST ORPHANAGE

PHILADELPHIA

from April 1, 1901

to April 1, 1902



HISTORICAL REFERENCES

THE BABY SCOOP ERA

Roughly 1945-1973, the decades between the postwar baby boom and *Roe v. Wade* (1973), millions of unwed American women were sent to maternity homes in secret and were forced to give up their babies. Adoption was presented as the only respectable path back to normal life.

Conversations with women like Ann Fessler and Karen Wilson-Buterbaugh, who have each spent decades documenting this era, confirmed what Jennifer already knew from her own family: this was never a handful of isolated tragedies. It was a system, built by people who believed they were protecting everyone's reputation but the mother's.

1945 - 1973

4 million

AMERICAN WOMEN
RELINQUISHED INFANTS
DURING THE BABY
SCOOP ERA

89,200

NUMBER OF NON-
RELATIVE INFANT
ADOPTIONS IN 1970

80 %

MATERNITY HOME
RESIDENTS
SURRENDERED BABIES

THE BABY SCOOP ERA

1945

POSTWAR BABY BOOM

1973

ROE V. WADE

HISTORICAL REFERENCES

FLORENCE CRITTENTON HOME

MIAMI, FL

The Florence Crittenton homes began in 1883, when Charles Crittenton opened a New York shelter in memory of his young daughter. Part of a Christian rescue movement, it offered refuge to women whom society called “fallen”; over time, the mission grew into a network of homes for unmarried pregnant women.

During the Baby Scoop era (1945–1973), the homes were framed to unwed mothers as the only choice they had to return to respectability: a private place to finish a pregnancy, receive care and sometimes continue school, with the promise that a woman could then return to her life. For many, that promised fresh start came with an expectation: keep the pregnancy secret, surrender the baby and move on.



HISTORICAL REFERENCES

FLORENCE CRITTENTON HOME

**your
generous
contribution
will
make
possible
these
services**

- Prenatal and medical care through clinical services within the Home,
- Nursing care and general health supervision within the Home,
- Confidential casework counseling,
- Educational training within the Home,
- Classes within the Home in Arts, Crafts, and Vocational Studies,
- Group recreational activities,
- Delivery in a local hospital with mother's return to Home for convalescence,
- Referral to local family agencies for planning to return to community with baby when this is desired,
- Adoption placement of baby through local licensed child placing agencies,
- Staff relationships at all levels will be consciously directed toward the upbuilding of self-respect and character,

Confinement and shame masquerading as compassionate care: that's what unwed mothers like Anna faced when they entered Florence Crittenton homes to finish out the remainder of their pregnancies. Curtains drawn on the lower floor so the women couldn't be seen, brief chaperoned outings with fake wedding rings to avoid questions, and counselors coaching them to "forget the father, your child, forget it all." It was a system designed to make newborn relinquishment feel inevitable rather than chosen.

When mothers eventually gave birth, they were not allowed to hold or even see their newborn children. Almost none were offered genuine alternatives, and almost all were expected to carry the loss alone, permanently.

HISTORICAL REFERENCES

SUGGESTED READING

BROADER RECOMMENDED
READING

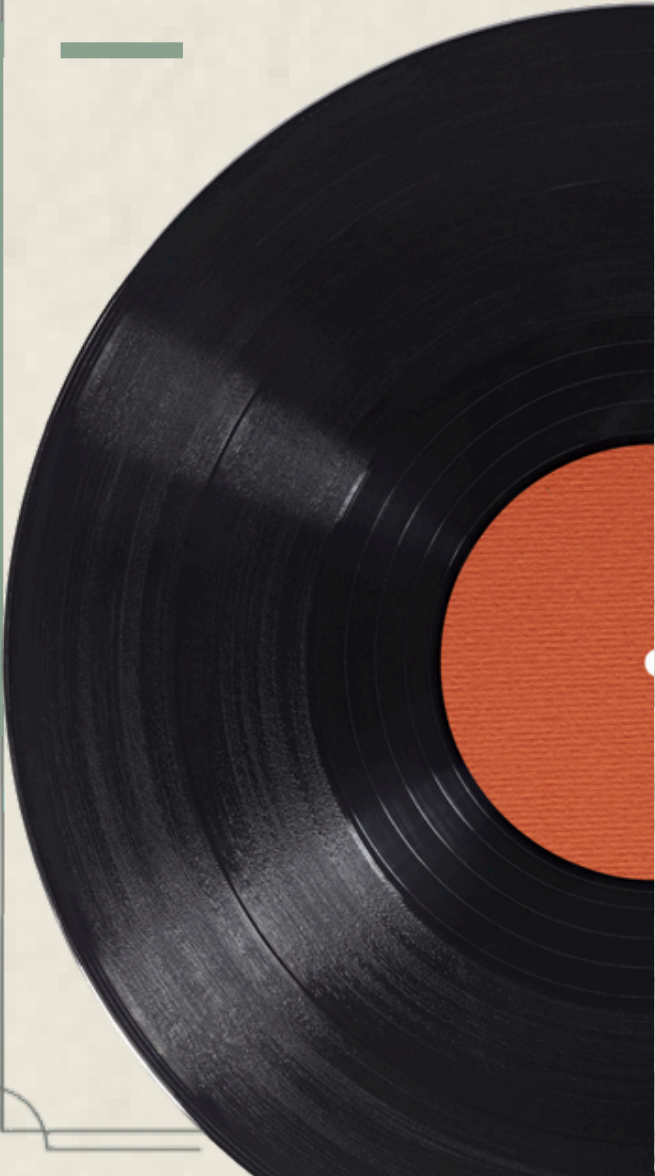


KAREN WILSON-BUTERBAUGH HOLDS HER
NEWBORN DAUGHTER AT THE FLORENCE
CRITTENTON MATERNITY HOME IN
WASHINGTON D.C. IN 1966.

DATE	ISSUED TO
	THE GIRLS WHO WENT AWAY
	BY ANN FESSLER
	THE LOST FAMILY
	BY LIBBY COPELAND
	AMERICAN BABY
	BY GABRIELLE GLASER
	THE BABY SCOOP ERA
	BY KAREN WILSON-BUTERBAUGH
	ADOPTION HEALING
	BY KAREN WILSON-BUTERBAUGH
	AND JOE SOLL

HISTORICAL REFERENCES

PODCAST EPISODES



“I PREFER TO THINK OF MYSELF AS A
SURVIVOR, NOT A HERO.”

— MY MOM, ANNA

[LISTEN HERE](#)

“IF YOU WERE PREGNANT AND UNWED, YOU
GOT OUT OF TOWN AS FAST AS POSSIBLE,
BECAUSE YOU WOULD BE ABSOLUTELY
RUINED.”

— ANN FESSLER

[LISTEN HERE](#)

“THEY DID NOT WANT US TO BOND WITH
THE BABY ... WE WOULD GET IN THE WAY OF
US SURRENDERING OUR BABIES.”

— KAREN WILSON-BUTERBAUGH

[LISTEN HERE](#)

PART ONE — WHAT CAME BEFORE

THE SOUNDTRACK



LISTEN ON
APPLE MUSIC

CHAPTER

LISTEN TO

01 “YOU HAVE A BROTHER”

TIMES OF TROUBLE - TEMPLE OF THE DOG

02 “WHERE HOME BEGAN”

RED HILL MINING TOWN - U2

03 “DEEP END OF THE POOL

KID FEARS - INDIGO GIRLS

04 “BANDAGES”

NOT ENOUGH TIME - INXS

05 “GINGER”

SIRENS - PEARL JAM

06 “FIVE TINY ROSES”

DON'T LET THE SUN GO DOWN ON ME -
GEORGE MICHAEL & ELTON JOHN

07 “SOMETHING THAT WAS MINE”

NOTHING ELSE MATTERS - MILEY
CYRUS, YO-YO MA, AND OTHERS

08 “LEAVING DADDY”

RELEASE - PEARL JAM

09 “COMING AND GOING”

THE STAIRS - INXS

10 “WAITING TO GO HOME”

WAIT FOR IT - LESLIE ODOM JR. &
HAMILTON CAST

11 “YOU ARE ON YOUR OWN”

DOLLAR BILL - SCREAMING TREES

PART TWO — SEEKING AGENCY

THE SOUNDTRACK



LISTEN ON
APPLE MUSIC

CHAPTER	LISTEN TO
12 “CLOUDS”	STARGAZER - MOTHER LOVE BONE
13 “PIECES”	WOULD? - ALICE IN CHAINS
14 “SUDDEN CHANGES”	DON’T CHANGE - INXS
15 “GRADUATING”	THE CLIMB - MILEY CYRUS
16 “BREAKING FREE”	PRELUDE IN C-SHARP MINOR, OP. 3, NO. 2 RACHMANINOFF (VLADIMIR ASHKENAZY)
17 “VOICE”	EXILE - TAYLOR SWIFT FT. BON IVER
18 “WAITING FOR A HERO”	ONE DAY MORE - LES MISÉRABLES CAST
19 “HOME”	GOING TO CALIFORNIA - LED ZEPPELIN
20 “THE ESCAPE”	OVER THE HILLS AND FAR AWAY - LED ZEPPELIN
21 “THE WEDDING”	ONE - MARY J. BLIGE FT. U2

PART THREE — RECKONING

THE SOUNDTRACK



LISTEN ON
APPLE MUSIC

CHAPTER	LISTEN TO
22 “LIFE STARTING”	SONNET 18 - BRYAN FERRY
23 “RUNNING”	BREATH - PEARL JAM
24 “BROKEN DREAMS”	HOME - FOO FIGHTERS
25 “WITNESS”	PRAYING - KESHA
26 “HARRY”	FELL ON BLACK DAYS - SOUNDGARDEN
27 “YOUR OWN DAMN FAULT”	GREY STREET - DAVE MATTHEWS BAND
28 “THE GIRL WHO DISAPPEARED”	CROWN OF THORNS - MOTHER LOVE BONE
29 “THE ORPHANAGE”	XO - BEYONCÉ
30 “WHAT LOVE FELT LIKE”	EVERLONG - FOO FIGHTERS
31 “THE BIRTH”	BOTH SIDES NOW - JONI MITCHELL
EPILOGUE	LANDSLIDE - FLEETWOOD MAC

FROM THE FAMILY ARCHIVE



ANNA AT THE PIANO



JENNIFER, ANNA, AND EVE



GINGER AND JENNIFER,
1979



RANGNOW CHILDREN ON
VISITING DAY (L TO R)
ANNA, JOHN, HOWARD, AND
EVE



JENNIFER AND LINDA

FROM THE FAMILY ARCHIVE



EVE ON HER
HONEYMOON - GREECE



ANNA'S PARENTS



EVE AND ANNA AT THE
ORPHANAGE



BETH, RICH,
JENNIFER, AND LINDA
IN PENNSYLVANIA



THE RANGNOW CHILDREN
WITH THEIR FATHER AT
THE ORPHANAGE

FROM THE FAMILY ARCHIVE



EVE BAKING A CAKE



EVE PLAYING THE PIANO



EVE PLAYING THE PIANO
(WITH JIM & JOHN)



THE AUXILIARY LADIES



CHILDREN OUTSIDE THE
ORPHANAGE

Thank you for exploring
Both Sides of Then.

[LEAVE AN AMAZON REVIEW](#)

[LEAVE A GOODREADS REVIEW](#)

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