

Not the Whole Story by Jackie Naffah

Jackie Naffah is a talented writer and accomplished artist. *Not the Whole Story* brings together a collection of short stories that will test your range of emotions and your powers of observation. The author's skilled use of word-play and close observation of the human condition provide the reader with a narrative that can be enjoyed at its simplest, or when repeatedly read and analysed, reveal multiple layers of meaning.

Each story is illustrated with a picture painted by Jackie (or a fellow artist), but which stirs the emotion most, the image or the words? Does the story illuminate the painting or is it the image that brings the words to life?

Not the Whole Story is 2018's 'must read' for the discerning book club.

Book Club Questions

1. How did you **experience the book**? Were you immediately drawn into the stories, or did it take you a while? Did the book intrigue, amuse, disturb, alienate, irritate, or frighten you?
2. Did you enjoy the **word-play** in the book (some of the double meanings – a handout is available for the book club facilitator)? Did you read the stories more than once and gain more insight a second time?
3. Do you feel the paintings that accompany the stories add to your experience or detract from it? Or do they work both alongside and independently?
4. Which were you drawn to first, the image or the text? Do you feel they are interchangeable? Do they work together?
5. Do you find the **characters convincing**? Are they believable? Compelling? Are they fully developed as complex, emotional human beings, or are they one-dimensional?
6. Which short story did you like best?
7. Is the story **plot or character driven**? In other words, do events unfold quickly? Or is more time spent developing characters' inner lives? Does it make a difference to your enjoyment?
8. Which characters do you particularly **admire or dislike**? What are their primary characteristics?
9. What **motivates** a given character's actions? Do you think those actions are justified or ethical?

10. Consider **the endings**. Did you expect them or were you surprised? Are the endings manipulative? Or forced? Are they neatly wrapped up, in fact too neatly? Or are stories unresolved, ending on an ambiguous note?
11. Who in this book would you most **like to meet**? What would you ask, or say?
12. Which short story did you like least?
13. What similarities do these stories share? How do they tie together, if indeed they do?
14. Do you think any of the stories could be expanded into a full-length book?
15. If you could **rewrite any ending**, would you? In other words, did you find the endings satisfying? Why or why not.
16. Can you **pick out a passage** that strikes you as particularly profound or interesting, or perhaps something that sums up the central dilemma of the story?
17. Do any of the stories remind you of **your own life**? An event or situation? A person--a friend, family member, boss, co-worker?
18. If you were to **talk with the author**, what would you want to know?
19. If you could sum up the book in a succinct way what would you say?