

NON-FICTION BOOK CLUB

March 2018 Selection

***First Women* by Kate Andersen Brower**

One of the most underestimated—and challenging—positions in the world, the First Lady of the United States must be many things: an inspiring leader with a forward-thinking agenda of her own; a savvy politician, skilled at navigating the treacherous rapids of Washington; a wife and mother operating under constant scrutiny; and an able CEO responsible for the smooth operation of countless services and special events at the White House. Now, as she did in her smash \$1 bestseller *The Residence*, former White House correspondent Kate Andersen Brower draws on a wide array of untapped, candid sources—from residence staff and social secretaries to friends and political advisers—to tell the stories of the ten remarkable women who have defined that role since 1960.

Brower offers new insights into this privileged group of remarkable women, including Jacqueline Kennedy, Lady Bird Johnson, Patricia Nixon, Betty Ford, Rosalynn Carter, Nancy Reagan, Barbara Bush, Hilary Clinton, Laura Bush, and Michelle Obama. The stories she shares range from the heartwarming to the shocking and tragic, exploring everything from the first ladies' political crusades to their rivalries with Washington figures; from their friendships with other first ladies to their public and private relationships with their husbands. She also offers insight as to Melania Trump might hope to accomplish as First Lady.

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Discussion Questions:

1. First ladies have undefined roles. What are the major expectations the author outlines in the book and how have they changed since Jacqueline Kennedy?
2. Which first lady enjoyed the job the most, and why? The least, and why?
3. Which first ladies became friends and which first ladies never saw eye to eye?
4. How have each of these ten women handled raising children while being in the spotlight?
5. Do you think we need to change any part of the position? For instance, should a first lady be allowed to continue her work in her chosen profession and collect a paycheck, or should she devote her time in the White House to being the president's spouse?
6. One day, when a woman is president, there will likely be a man serving as "first gentleman." How do you think the position will change with a man occupying it?
7. Aside from Hilary Clinton, which of these women had the biggest voice in her husband's administrations and how did she influence policy?
8. Was there a specific message or theme of the book?
9. Was there a chapter or passage that stood out for you?
10. What did you learn from this book that you didn't know before?
11. If you could meet any one of the ten first ladies featured in the book, from Jacqueline Kennedy to Melania Trump, who would you pick and why?



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Recommendations:

- If you liked *First Women*, you might like *The Residence*
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- You might also enjoy *Sisters First*
(<http://www.booksamillion.com/p/9781538711415>)