

A READER'S GUIDE

Turn, Magic Wheel

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Questions for Discussion

1. Johnson and MacTweed debate the ethics of publishing with *The Hunter's Wife*. MacTweed feels that Dennis Orphen has violated the "gentleman's code" by "raking over a giant, a titan, like Andrew Callingham." Discuss the possible motivation behind MacTweed's decision to quickly change his mind about supporting Orphen's book.

2. At the hospital, Effie endures the pain of hearing about Andy and Marian's loving relationship and lust for one another in great detail. Why do you think Effie is able to be so cordial and supportive of a woman who essentially stole her husband? Do you think this is possible only because Andy has also now left Marian and Marian has admitted that she now knows how Effie must have felt?

3. Discuss the reasons why Effie would have ever told Andy to go off with Marian given her love for him. Do you believe it was because she had another love interest, as Andy suggests when they reunite at the end of the book? Do you believe that Effie is in love with Dennis Orphen?

4. Dennis talks about Effie as if they were lovers. "For the first time he realized how completely Effie had grown to fill his life. . . . She was the first friend he had ever had who was unfailingly, dependably satisfying. . . . He remembers how intensely they had talked, argued, agreed, laughed with such undivided attention for one another that the others in the room would slip away unnoticed, and presently they would be left alone like two absorbed lovers, not one person to each other but a complete circle." Discuss the components of their relationship and how the relationship evolves from the beginning of the book to the end.

5. Was Effie's life was "hinged on a lie"?

6. When Effie questions Dennis Orphen's reasons for writing his book, he responds "I wrote it for you." Effie clearly questioned his intentions and ability to damage her reputation and their friendship. Why do you think Dennis would write about something that was so painful for his friend? Do you think Effie is actually glad that the book was written, as she states at the end of the book? Does it really make her see Andy the way she should have all along?

7. *Turn, Magic Wheel*, a novel about a writer who bases his fiction on the lives of others, is itself based on the lives of others. Andrew Callingham, a character loosely based on Ernest Hemingway, might be the most immediately recognizable.

While at work on *Turn, Magic Wheel* Powell wrote in her famous diaries: "I hate to use real people and hurt them but I have reached the point where I must sacrifice my tender feelings for reality." In the end Powell felt that crossing this line enabled her to write her "best, simplest and most original book." Are there boundaries that writers should not cross for the sake of their art?

8. *Turn, Magic Wheel* was the first of numerous satirical novels Powell would write. Discuss the following quote, taken from her diaries: "Satire is people as they are; romanticism people as they would like to be; realism people as they seem with their insides left out."