**Miller’s Valley
by Anna Quindlen**

**About the Book**

For generations the Millers have lived in Miller’s Valley. Mimi Miller tells about her life with intimacy and honesty. As Mimi eavesdrops on her parents and quietly observes the people around her, she discovers more and more about the toxicity of family secrets, the dangers of gossip, the flaws of marriage, the inequalities of friendship and the risks of passion, loyalty, and love. Home, as Mimi begins to realize, can be “a place where it’s just as easy to feel lost as it is to feel content.”

Miller’s Valley is a masterly study of family, memory, loss, and, ultimately, discovery, of finding true identity and a new vision of home. As Mimi says, “No one ever leaves the town where they grew up, even if they go.” Miller’s Valley reminds us that the place where you grew up can disappear, and the people in it too, but all will live on in your heart forever.

**About the Author**

Anna Quindlen is the author of three bestselling novels, Object Lessons, One True Thing and Black and Blue, and three non-fiction books, Living Out Loud, Thinking Out Loud and A Short Guide to a Happy Life. Her New York Times column 'Public and Private' won a Pulitzer Prize in 1992. She is currently a columnist for Newsweek and lives with her husband and children in New York.

**If you enjoyed this book*:***

* The Excellent Lombards by Jane Hamilton
* Commonwealth by Ann Patchett
* Everyone Brave is Forgiven by Chris Cleave
* Two If by Sea by Jacquelyn Mitchard
* The Children by Ann Leary

**Discussion Questions**

1. How would you describe Mimi as the book opens, and how does she change over the course of the novel? What does she come to learn, as she matures, about place and home?
2. Mimi's mother Miriam feels trapped in Miller Valley, yet her husband Bud is tied to the land. How do their positions reflect their individual personalities...and affect their relationship as a couple. In other words, describe Miriam and Bud and their marriage. With whom do your sympathies lie—with one more than another, or with both equally?
3. Why is Mimi so tied the valley? "I knew there was a world outside," she says, "I just had a hard time imagining it." When her mother tells Mimi that her grades in school mean a "road to something better than this," Mimi balks. Is her reluctance merely a childish fear to move beyond a familiar world? Or is it something else? If you were Mimi's mother, or an elderly friend, would you urge her to move on?
4. Mimi says she "felt lost most of the time," as if there was a "big rattly empty space between her stomach and heart." She wonders "whether other people felt the same way without showing it." What does she mean? Is she speaking of basic loneliness, or something else? Has she expressed a feeling common to many (most) of us?
5. Talk about Ruth and her agoraphobia. Why does she inspire bitterness on the part of her sister Miriam? Did you sense what Ruth's secret was, or were you surprised once it was revealed?
6. The book asks an important question about how closely our identities are tied to our origins, both place and family. Do we change when we adapt to new experiences and when we lose what we treasure? Do we ever really leave the past behind us?
7. The book takes place in the 1960s. If you were alive at that time, how well does Quindlen bring the era to life? Was it a different time from now—culturally or sociologically?