



Oxford Reads 2020
Reading Guide

***Crow* by Amy Spurway**

This Crow will ruffle a few feathers.

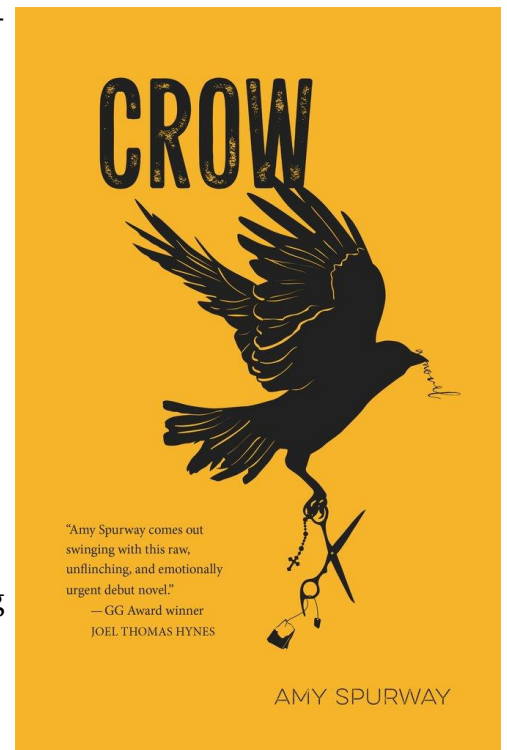
When Stacey Fortune is diagnosed with three highly unpredictable — and inoperable — brain tumours, she abandons the crumbling glamour of her life in Toronto for her mother Effie's scruffy trailer in rural Cape Breton. Back home, she's known as Crow, and everybody suspects that her family is cursed.

With her future all but sealed, Crow decides to go down in a blaze of unforgettable glory by writing a memoir that will raise eyebrows and drop jaws. She'll dig up "the dirt" on her family tree, including the supposed curse, and uncover the truth about her mysterious father, who disappeared a month before she was born.

But first, Crow must contend with an eclectic assortment of characters, including her gossipy Aunt Peggy, hedonistic party-pal Char, homebound best friend Allie, and high-school flame Willy. She'll also have to figure out how to live with her mother and how to muddle through the unsettling visual disturbances that are becoming more and more vivid each day.

Witty, energetic, and crackling with sharp Cape Breton humour, *Crow* is a story of big twists, big personalities, big drama, and even bigger heart.

- *Goose Lane Editions*



Discussion Questions

1. What are your thoughts on Crow's character development throughout the novel? Did you find her relatable? Likeable or unlikeable?
2. Many themes ran through the story; illness, a homecoming, poverty, the relationship between mothers and daughters, and complicated family dynamics. Which of these, or of the other themes, did you find most compelling and why?

3. Often it's said that "you can't go home again". Is this true in Crow's case? How does her transition from Toronto back to Cape Breton differ from other homecoming stories? How is it the same?
 4. Discuss the concept of identity in *Crow*. How does it apply to Crow, her family, and friends? How is identity shaped by where one lives?
 5. Tea and food (e.g. Effie's broc-o-glop, funeral hams, etc.) are of recurring importance throughout the book. Discuss the significance of food, family, and community within *Crow*.
 6. In addition to the people in *Crow*, Cape Breton itself is a character. Discuss the setting and its importance to the story.
 7. The concepts of death and loss run through the novel. How do Crow's feelings about these topics evolve throughout the story, and why?
 8. *Crow* has several elements of magical realism (or the incorporation of magic/magical elements while still grounded in reality), especially in the second half of the book. How does magical realism aid in Crow's (Stacey's) character development? How does it impact Crow's relationship with her family and friends? How does it impact her view of death and dying?
 9. There were many twists and turns in the novel; Effie's death, the revelations about the healing work Effie did over the years, the appearance (and real identity) of Brother Gysalto, and the revelation of the identity of Crow's real father. Which of the plots twists did you find most surprising and why?
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If you enjoyed *Crow*, you might want to try...

FICTION

Small Game Hunting at the Local Coward Gun Club by Megan Gail Coles
The Empress of Idaho by Todd Babiak
Bina: A Novel in Warnings by Anakana Schofield
Fall on Your Knees by Ann-Marie MacDonald
Anything is Possible by Elizabeth Strout
The Imperfectionists by Tom Rachman

NON-FICTION

The Woo-Woo: How I Survived Ice Hockey, Drug Raids, Demons, and My Crazy Chinese Family by Lindsay Wong
The Glass Castle by Jeanette Walls
You Don't Have to Say You Love Me by Sherman Alexie

All titles are available at both Oxford County Library and Woodstock Public Library, in either physical or electronic formats.
