

Ann Patchett Biography

Source: litlovers.com



Ann Patchett was born in Los Angeles but raised in Nashville, Tennessee. While at Sarah Lawrence College in New York, she studied with such notable authors as Russell Banks and Grace Paley before getting her first short works published. She labored long and hard in the trenches of *Seventeen* magazine (where her talents went largely unrecognized), before striking gold with her ambitious first novel, *The Patron Saint of Liars*, which was named a New York Times Notable Book of 1992 and subsequently made into a major motion picture.

Since her auspicious debut, Patchett has crafted a handful of elegant novels, garnering several accolades and awards along the way. But her real breakthrough occurred with 2001's *Bel Canto*, a taut, psychological thriller set in the claustrophobic confines of an embassy under siege in South America. Winning both the PEN/Faulkner Award and the Orange Prize, *Bel Canto* catapulted Patchett into the ranks of bestselling authors.

As if to prove her versatility, Patchett departed from fiction for 2004's *Truth & Beauty*, the heartbreaking account of her longstanding, difficult friendship with the late Lucy Grealy, a gifted writer whose disfigurement from cancer precipitated a tragic descent into addiction and death. This memoir won several literary awards and appeared on many end-of-year best books lists. Her novel, *Run*, followed in 2007.

Success breeds success; and with each book, Patchett's reputation grows. Perhaps the secret to her popularity has been captured best by Patchett's friend, Pulitzer Prize winner Robert Olen Butler. "She is a genius of the human condition," he says. "I can't think of many other writers, ever, who get anywhere near her ability to comprehend the vastness and diversity of humanity, and to articulate our deepest heart."

Book Summary

Source: litlovers.com

It's a winter evening in Boston and the temperature has drastically dropped as a blizzard approaches the city. On this fateful night, Bernard Doyle plans to meet his two adopted sons, Tip the older, and more serious, and Teddy, the affectionate dreamer, at a Harvard auditorium to hear a speech given by Jesse Jackson.

Doyle, an Irish Catholic and former Boston mayor, has done his best to keep his two sons interested in politics, from the day he and his now deceased wife became their parents, through their childhoods, and now in their lives as college students. Though the two boys are African-American, the bonds of the family's love have never been tested. But as the snow begins to fall, an accident triggers into motion a series of events that will forever change their lives.

This is at its very center, a novel about what truly defines family and the lengths we will go to protect our children. Patchett beautifully weaves together seemingly disparate lives to show how intimately humans can connect. Stunning and powerful, *Run* is sure to engage any Patchett fan and bring her even more admirers.

Discussion Questions

Source: litlovers.com

1. How would you characterize Teddy and Tip's relationship as siblings? How does it compare to their relationship with their brother, Sullivan?
2. At the Jesse Jackson lecture, Doyle reviews the personalities of his three sons and thinks about which of them would be most able to lead. Which of the boys do you think would make the best politician? Do you think Doyle's assessments of their characters are accurate or biased?
3. Discuss the concept of nature versus nurture. Do you think that Sullivan, Tip, and Teddy are who they are, or would they have turned out differently had Bernadette lived? How would those differences manifest themselves?

4. Discuss the different meanings of the title. How many different ways does the word *Run* work for you?

5. *Run* includes several incidences of doubling—two brothers who get adopted, two mothers who die, two men named Sullivan, two Tennessee Alice Mosers, two accidents involving hospital stays. What is the effect for you as a reader of seeing similar characters and events repeated over the course of the book? Can you think of any other examples of doubling in literature?

6. Why is Kenya the one subject that Sullivan and his father can agree on? How does her adoption into the family help Teddy and Tip understand Sullivan and what he went through growing up?

7. Towards the end of the story we see images of four mothers (including the Virgin Mary) on Kenya's dresser. What is the author saying about women and mothers to have them all there together?

8. Why does Kenya's mother conceal her true identity from her daughter? Do you think that she imagines the conversation in the hospital with Tennessee Alice Moser after surgery or do you think it really happened?

9. What does Father Sullivan's encounter with Tennessee in the hospital suggest about his ability to heal?

10. Doyle is very invested in politics on both local and national levels, but he falters at the idea of taking home a stray child. What does this book say to you about social responsibility?

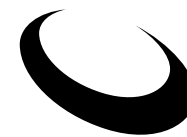
11. Of the many characters in *Run*, which did you feel most connected to on an emotional level? How do you explain that connection?

12. How did you react to Bernard Doyle's decision to bestow the heirloom statue on Kenya, a daughter who has literally shared nothing with his former wife, Bernadette? Do you think he made the same decision his wife would have made?



Book Club in a Bag

Run
by Ann Patchett



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Run
Contents and Sign-out Sheet

Kits include one bag, 10 books, and a pocket folder of materials.
Use this sign-out sheet to keep track of who takes which copy of the book. Groups may keep the folder when returning the books and bag.

Copy	Name	Returned
1	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Due Date:



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