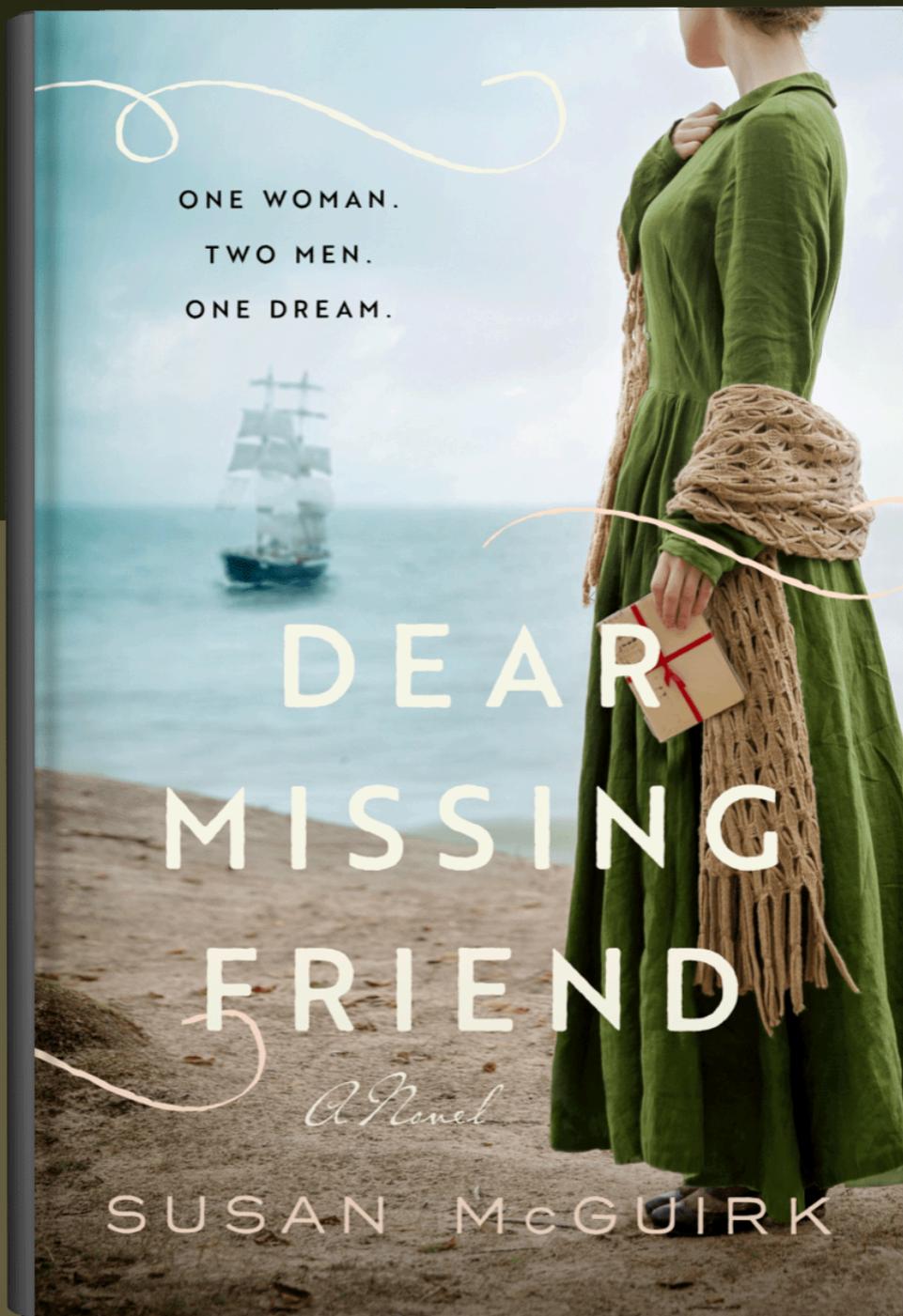


# BOOK CLUB GUIDE



Three hearts. Countless letters.  
One impossible choice.

# ABOUT

Dear Missing Friend & Susan McGuirk



**The Book:** Through letters exchanged across oceans and Manhattan streets, Irish immigrant Catherine McGuirk navigates love, ambition, and heartbreak. Torn between her seafaring husband, the suitor she once refused, and her own dreams, Catherine’s fate unfolds in an intimate, epistolary saga of passion, resilience, and 19th-century life.

**The Author:** Susan McGuirk posts about heroines of historical fiction books on her blog “The Storied Sisters Society,” on Bluesky and on her website, [www.susanmcguirk.com](http://www.susanmcguirk.com). Her novel, *Dear Missing Friend*, from Sea Crow Press, has been longlisted for the Goethe Award for Historical Fiction. She worked at Anthology Film Archives, a historical film museum, where she received its Film Preservation Award and serves on the Board of Advisors.



## Dear Missing Friend

# DISCUSSION GUIDE

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01

Is there a character you would befriend and why?

02

Did letter writing play a comparable role in the book to emails and texts today?

03

What role did books play in the character's lives? Who were affected by them and in what way?

04

Did the characters have expectations for their lives that were in line with their circumstances? Did they expect too much or settle for too little?

05

Sisterhood is a theme in the book even though most of the women characters do not have sisters. Can the experience be duplicated in a friendship or as an in-law through marriage?

## Dear Missing Friend

# DISCUSSION GUIDE

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06

How did needing, seeking, and finding employment steer individual lives in the book?

07

Losing family members of all ages was common in the mid-1800s. Did the characters move past loss differently than we do today?

08

When did Cath ask for permission and when did she not?

09

Did Cath have regrets? If given the chance to start over, would she have made different choices?

10

What might Cath have done had she lived past the age of 46?