



Book Club Set

On The Ravine

By Vincent Lam

About the Author



Vincent Lam's first book, *Bloodletting & Miraculous Cures*, won the 2006 Scotiabank Giller Prize, and was adapted for television and broadcast on HBO Canada. *The Headmaster's Wager*, Dr. Lam's first novel, was shortlisted for the 2012 Governor General's Literary Award and the 2013 Commonwealth Book Prize. Dr. Lam is also the co-author of *The Flu Pandemic and You*, a non-fiction guide to influenza pandemics, which received a Special Recognition Award by the American Medical Writers' Association in 2007. He served as executive editor and co-author of the textbook, *Opioid Agonist Therapy: A Prescriber's Guide to Treatment*, published in 2022. In 2011, he published a biography of Tommy Douglas, "father of medicare," for Penguin Canada's Extraordinary Canadians Series. Dr. Lam is an emergency physician and addictions physician who lives in Toronto. He is the medical director of the Coderix Medical Clinic.

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About the Book



From the bestselling Giller Prize-winning author of *Bloodletting & Miraculous Cures* comes an exquisitely crafted novel, piercing in its urgency and breathtaking in its intimacy, about the devastating experience of addiction.

In his downtown Toronto condo, Dr. Chen awakens to the sound of streetcars below, but it is not the early morning traffic that keeps him from sleeping. News banners run across his phone: Fentanyl Crisis; Toxic Drug Supply; Record Number of Deaths. From behind the headlines, on the same screen, glow the faces of his patients, the faces of the what-ifs: What if he had done more, or less? Or something different? Would they still be alive?

Claire is a violinist; she feels at one with her music, taking flight in its melody, free in its movement. But now she rises and falls with the opioids in her system, becoming increasingly reckless. After two overdoses in twenty-four hours, she sits in the blue light of her computer, searching a notice board for recommendations: my doctor saved my life; my doctor is just another dealer. And then another message catches her attention, about Chen's clinic: be a guinea pig—why not get paid to take it?

When Claire's life intersects with Chen's, the doctor is drawn ever more deeply into the complexities of the doctor-patient relationship, the implication and meaning of his intention to treat. Chen must confront just how far he would go to save a life.

Combining the depth of his experience as a physician with the brilliance of his literary talent, Vincent Lam creates a world electric in its precision, radiant in its detail. *On the Ravine* is a gripping novel of profound emotional force, a soaring achievement from a singular voice in Canadian fiction.

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Discussion Questions



1. What is the theme of the short story "The Ravine"?
2. What did you like least about this book?
3. What feelings did this book evoke for you?
4. Share a favorite quote from the book. Why did this quote stand out?
5. What new things did you learn? What questions do you still have?
6. Had you heard about the book before starting it?
7. Would you read another book by this author? Why or why not?

Share your thoughts with other readers!



DATE: _____

BOOK CLUB: _____

BOOK TITLE: _____

As a group we rated this book:

1	2	3	4	5
Ugh!		It was OK...		Loved it!

Would we recommend this book to other book clubs?

Yes No Undecided

Why/why not?

Our discussion: