

# Your Next Book Club Read



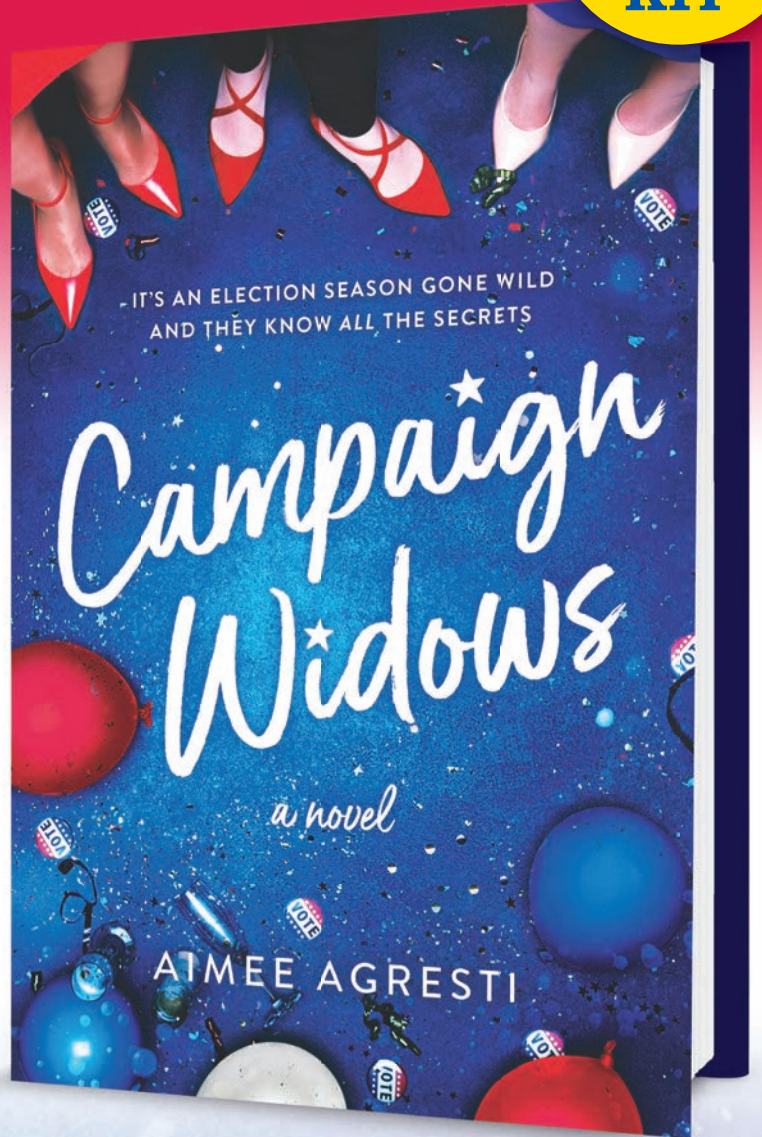
It's an election season gone wild in this "irresistible" (*Cosmopolitan*) and "whip-smart" (*Us Weekly*) novel about a delicious cast of characters who forge an unlikely friendship while their significant others are out on the campaign trail.

## Cady Davenport is living the American dream...

At least she's supposed to be. She's in a new city, with a new job and even a new fiancé. But when her husband-to-be hits the road for the upcoming presidential election, Cady realizes she's on her own-and that her dream life might not be all she'd imagined.

Until she finds herself thrust straight into the heart of the most influential inner circle in Washington, DC: the campaign widows. As friends, they're an unlikely group-a fabulous Georgetown doyenne; a speechwriter turned mommy blogger; an artsy website editor; and a First Lady Hopeful who's not convinced she wants the job. But they share one undeniable bond: their spouses are all out on the trail during a hotly contested election season.

Cady is unsure of her place in their illustrious group, but with the pressures of the unprecedented election mounting, the widows' worlds keep turning-faster than ever-as they hold down the fort while running companies, raising babies, racking up page views and even reinventing themselves. And their friendship might be just what Cady needs to find the strength to pursue her own happiness.



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## Discussion Questions

1. How does Cady's arrival as the new girl in town bring the Widows together? In what ways does she become the glue uniting them?
2. Though the Widows all lead very different lives, they quickly become each other's shoulders to cry on. What are the turning points in their friendships? Think about your own friendships. What are some of the moments that have solidified those bonds?
3. How is the campaign itself a character? What effect does it have on each character's relationships? Think about your own relationships. How have they been tested, and what made them succeed or stumble?
4. Discuss how each Widow evolves over the course of the story. How do the bumps in their romantic relationships make them stronger as individuals?
5. In what ways do the Widows end up influencing the election, despite being on the periphery of the campaigns?
6. Do you think Rocky Haze will be a good leader, and if so, why? Would you have voted for her?
7. Discuss the current of girl power running through the story. How are many of the women underestimated at different times in the novel? How does each overcome obstacles and rise above the naysayers?
8. What would each Widow have to say about the idea of "having it all," the notion of successfully balancing personal and professional lives? How does this theme relate to your own life?
9. How is the theme of independence woven throughout the novel? What type of message does the story send about believing in yourself and taking chances?
10. Which Widow did you most relate to? Which Widow would you most want to be friends with and why?
11. Discuss the tone at the end of the novel. How did you feel about the way the author chose to conclude the story?



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Hi there!

I'm so excited to introduce my new novel *CAMPAIGN WIDOWS*! It's thrilling for me to see it in bookstores because the book has been living in my head for so many years.

The idea for the book was first sparked by my own experience as a campaign widow, even though the events in here really are fiction. (Thank goodness none of this drama happened in real life! Well, except for that one scene involving the Secret Service scooping up a child running wild at the White House on Halloween...which is based on my son.)

Much like the character of Reagan in my novel, I like to consider myself a pretty experienced campaign widow. I've been a widow three times (almost four!), all during Senate elections. My husband, Brian, has spent much of his career in the U.S. Senate as a communications director—though he was also a “political appointee” during the Obama years. (This brought great perks, like that trick-or-treating experience at the White House, which our children enjoyed too much.) Right now, Brian is back in the Senate again.

I first became a widow a million years ago, when my husband was just my boyfriend. I'll never forget the day he came home from work as a Senate staffer on Capitol Hill and proudly declared that he would be joining his first campaign—to help reelect a Louisiana senator—and was shipping out immediately.

Brian would be living in New Orleans for a few months: How fabulous! I'd never been to the Big Easy and it sounded so exciting! I imagined weekends spent sipping Hurricanes on Bourbon Street and looked forward to, at last, truly grasping the difference between *étouffée* and gumbo—I was a freelance magazine writer, so I had time on my hands. Unfortunately, Brian quickly snuffed out my plans: while he appreciated the support, he would be working round the clock and would see me in November after the election. (It actually ended up being December...there was a run-off!)

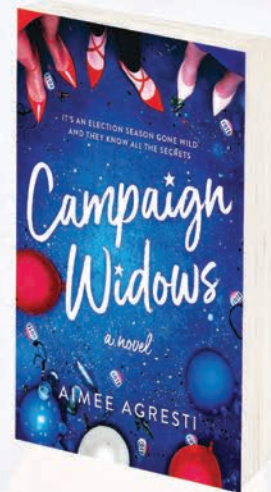
Since I'm a writer, I have an overly active imagination, so at first I had all these crazy ideas of what a campaign might be like. I imagined a Venn diagram where Raucous Spring Break intersected with High School Debate Team, some kind of wild camp for intellectuals. It also set my mind off running in scary directions (ie: what if he never came back?!) Though I didn't much understand the pressure cooker he was entering when I bade him a teary goodbye at the airport, I quickly came to appreciate all that goes into that kind of job. It's grueling, relentless work. Living and dying by poll numbers. Eating, sleeping and breathing this shared goal of getting your candidate elected. It was also a great adventure and bonding experience with colleagues. I was incredibly proud of him.

But of course, back home, life goes on...which is where the idea for the book came from. I channeled all of my fears and concerns into this novel, set it amid the backdrop of a zany, topsy-turvy election and created what I hope you'll find is a fun yet engaging escapist read about a group of unlikely friends left behind in DC when their significant others are off on the trail.

As for my real-life campaign widowhood? That Louisiana senator won (hurrah!) and Brian came back to work at his old job. After another campaign, we moved back to New York for a while, got married and then when President Obama was elected, we came back. I was a widow again when our first son was a year old. But by then, I knew the drill.

Our son and I watched the election returns cheering together at home. That tradition has held, whether Brian is away or home, in our household, even now, election night is our version of Super Bowl Sunday. (Albeit one with much, much higher stakes!)

Thanks for reading and hope this book gets your vote!



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## Aimee Agresti's CAMPAIGN WIDOWS Spotify Playlist!

If you're reading CAMPAIGN WIDOWS  
you've gotta listen to this!

### PLAY ON SPOTIFY

<https://spoti.fi/2LBxDEh>

1. **That's My Girl**  
Fifth Harmony
2. **Instigators**  
Grace Potter
3. **Run the World (Girls)**  
Beyoncé
4. **Make Me Feel**  
Janelle Monáe
5. **The Greatest**  
Sia, Kendrick Lamar
6. **Dirty Little Secret**  
Pickin' On Series, Cornbread Red
7. **Make It Out This Town**  
Eve, Gabe Saporta of Cobra Starship
8. **Pursuit of Happiness (nightmare)**  
Kid Cudi, MGMT, Ratatat
9. **Don't Panic**  
Ellie Goulding
10. **Bad Blood**  
Ryan Adams
11. **Uh Huh**  
Julia Michaels
12. **Hold Me Tight Or Don't**  
Fall Out Boy
13. **Dangerous Night**  
Thirty Seconds to Mars
14. **Fly**  
Nicki Minaj, Rihanna



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