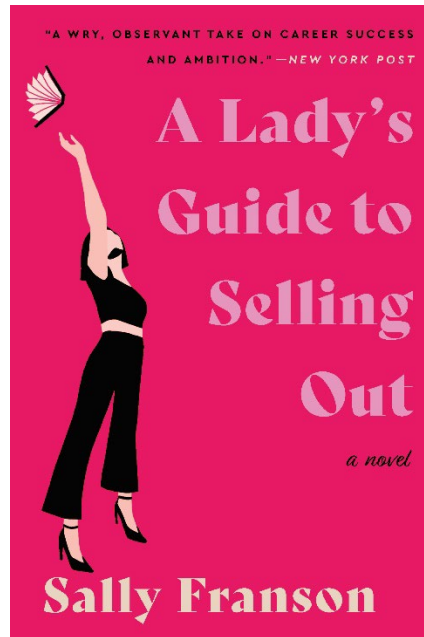




MARINER BOOKS

A PUBLISHING TRADITION SINCE 1832

READING GROUP GUIDE for **A LADY'S GUIDE TO SELLING OUT** by Sally Franson



Mariner Books

[Trade Paperback 9780063317727](#)

“Wickedly funny.” —*Bustle*

“This frothy, sneaky tale from Franson intermixes elements of *The Bold Type*, *Mad Men*, and *The Devil Wears Prada*.” —*Entertainment Weekly*

“A wry, observant take on career success and ambition.” —*New York Post*

“With smart, funny characters and perfectly crafted dialogue, Franson cleverly explores the battle between giving in and staying true to oneself.” —*Booklist*

A young woman navigates a tricky twenty-first-century career—and the trickier question of who she wants to be—in this savagely wise, razor-sharp novel.

Soon to be a Netflix feature film directed by Meg Ryan!



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At 28, Casey Pendergast is not where she thought she'd be. Sure, she's killing it at her high-paying advertising job, but when she thinks about the idealistic English major she used to be, she can't help the nagging feeling that perhaps her best friend is right—Casey is a sellout who's traded her dreams for a high-rise condominium, expense account, and designer handbags.

When her boss assigns her to a lucrative new campaign to lure acclaimed authors into becoming content creators for corporations, Casey doubts that her literary idols will buy into this particular brand of capitalism. But determined to give it her best shot, she begins her trek across America, only to find herself stunned by how easily these writers agree to compromise their work and integrity in exchange for some extra cash. As she grapples with her own conscience, and falls in love with one of the authors she's courting, Casey begins to question just how much she's willing to sacrifice to chase material success.

Can Casey redefine success on her own terms, and keep her soul?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is it about Casey's boss, Celeste, that turns Casey into a "praise-seeking missile"? How much of it comes from the fact that Celeste is a woman, and how much from Celeste being People's Republic founder? Have you had a similar relationship with a boss of any gender? Do you relate to Casey's desire to please Celeste? Why or why not?
2. Casey and Susan are characters, but together they might also serve as an archetype for a certain kind of female friendship. Do you think you're more of a Casey or a Susan in your friendships? Does your role depend on the person, or on the duration of the friendship? Have these roles changed over time and with life experience? What's the most 'Casey' thing about you? The most 'Susan'?
3. Celeste offers Casey a Faustian bargain with Nanü: power, money, and access in exchange for a healthy workplace and a clear conscience. Why does Casey make the decision to go along with Celeste's plan? Have you ever faced a similar impasse, at work or elsewhere? What decision did you make and why?
4. Casey crushes on Ben right from the bat, but she still encourages him to sign his Nanü contract. Did she have a moral or ethical obligation to tell him about her own reservations about the deal, or was the onus on Ben to decide for himself?
5. Did Casey do the right thing, giving Susan's poetry to Wolf Prana, even though Wolf ended up plagiarizing Susan? Have you ever taken a morally gray action to help a friend? Share a little about your experience.



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6. What do you make of the fact that all the authors Casey meets on her travels across America agree to work with Nanü immediately and without much trepidation? Did you expect them to resist more? Why do you think they don't?
7. How much did Casey's upbringing, and her relationships with Rake and Louise, play a role in her getting embroiled with Nanü? What did she learn growing up that she might have carried with her into the role Celeste gave her? How much, if at all, can we assign responsibility to our parents for choices we make as adults? Explain.
8. Did Julian North's behavior in Las Vegas surprise you? Several years into the #MeToo movement, have you become accustomed to news about powerful men's misconduct, or do these stories still have the power to shock? Or is it both? Reflect on your own experiences and your past and current perspective on #MeToo.
9. Ellen Hanks is a lot of things — reality star, entrepreneur, main character — but is she also, somewhat surprisingly, a mensch? Why do think she goes out of her way not once but twice to help Casey?
10. Casey's dream to become a star comes true at the end, but on a much smaller scale than she initially envisioned. Yet she seems very happy. What might that tell us about ambition and fulfillment? Explain.

ALSO AVAILABLE: ***BIG IN SWEDEN***

Sally Franson's charming, wise, and laugh-out-loud funny novel following an American woman competing on a Swedish reality show to discover her roots.



9780063312746 * \$28.00 * Hardcover
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Paulie Johansson has never put much stock in the idea of family: she has her long-term boyfriend Declan and beloved best friend Jemma, and that's more than enough for her. Yet one night on a lark, she lets Jemma convince her to audition for *Sverige och Mig*, a show on Swedish television where Swedish-Americans compete to win the ultimate prize: a reunion with their Swedish relatives. Much to her shock, her drunken submission video wins her a spot on the show, and against Declan's advice, Paulie decides to go for it.

Armed with her Polaroid camera and an unquenchable sense of possibility, Paulie hops on a plane to Sweden and launches into the contest with seven other Americans, all under the watchful eye of a camera crew. At first, Paulie is certain that she and her competitors have nothing in common besides their passports and views their bloodthirsty ambitions with suspicion. Yet amid the increasingly absurd challenges—rowing from Denmark to Sweden in the freezing rain, baking the perfect Midsommar cake, competing in a pickled herring eating contest—Paulie finds herself rethinking her snap judgments about her fellow countrymen, while her growing attachment to her Swedish roots increases her resolve to win the competition herself.

“If you devoured *Pippi Longstocking* as a kid, you will not be able to turn away from *Big in Sweden*. Reading this hilarious, heartfelt book was even more fun than watching reality television. I absolutely loved it!”

—Jessica Anya Blau, author of *Mary Jane*