

## Further Reading

**Anything is Possible**  
**Elizabeth Strout (2018)**  
**STROUT**

Two sisters, one who trades self-respect for a wealthy husband and one who discovers a kindred spirit in the pages of a book, struggle with intimate human dramas at the sides of their community members and a returned Lucy Barton.

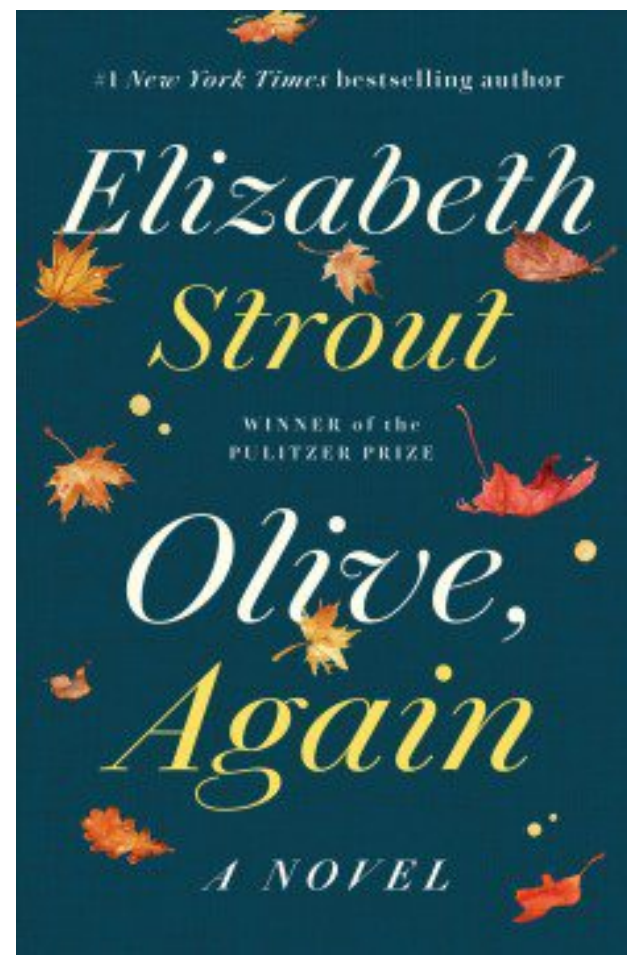
**My Name is Lucy Barton**  
**Elizabeth Strout (2016)**  
**STROUT**

After an appendix operation puts her in the hospital, New York writer Lucy Barton reconnects with her estranged mother as the pair reminisce about the past.

**The Burgess Boys**  
**Elizabeth Strout (2013)**  
**STROUT**

Catalyzed by a nephew's thoughtless prank, a pair of brothers confront painful psychological issues surrounding the freak accident that killed their father when they were boys, a loss linked to a heartbreaking deception that shaped their personal and professional lives.

## Book Discussion Guide



## About the Book

The iconic Olive struggles to understand not only herself and her own life but also the lives of those around her in the town of Crosby, Maine. Whether with a teenager coming to terms with the loss of her father, a young woman about to give birth during a hilariously inopportune moment, a nurse who confesses a secret high school crush, or a lawyer who struggles with an inheritance she does not want to accept, the unforgettable Olive will continue to startle us, move us, and inspire moments of transcendent grace.

## Discussion Questions

1. Olive Kitteridge is a fascinating character. Some readers might see her as abrasive and unlikeable; others might see her as honest and sympathetic. How do you characterize Olive?
2. If you read *Olive Kitteridge*, do you feel Olive has changed in *Olive, Again*? If so, in what ways? If not, what about her has stayed the same?
3. During a fight with her son, Christopher, Olive realizes “that she had been frightened of her son for years.” How does she come to this realization? How does it influence how Olive thinks of herself as a mother?
4. Watching Ann yell at Christopher, Olive realizes she had yelled at her late husband, Henry, in much the same way. What does she come to accept about herself as a person? How does she ask for forgiveness?
5. How did you feel reading “Cleaning,” the chapter about Kayley and Mr. Ringrose? Would you qualify it as a type of harassment, or did you feel Kayley was empowered and exploring her sexuality? Does the fact that Mr. Ringrose left Kayley money complicate any of your feelings?
6. Strout writes that there were a few nights during Jack’s marriage to Olive where “he had sat on the front porch and had—half drunk—wept, because he wanted to be with Betsy instead.” How did you interpret this? Did it feel like a betrayal (even involuntarily) to you, or simply a fact of life?
7. What are the different secrets and experiences that bond Bernie and Suzanne together? How did they both help each other? Do you think it’s rare to see an emotionally—but not physically—intimate relationship like theirs in fiction? What about in real life?
8. Bernie tells Suzanne she doesn’t need to tell her husband about her affair. She clearly believes it’s a mistake and isn’t planning to repeat it. Do you agree with Bernie’s advice? Is it ever smarter to keep a secret like that, or do you believe one must always tell the truth?
9. Olive tells Cindy, “The truth is—we’re all just a few steps behind you. Twenty minutes behind you, and that’s the truth.” Was this notion a comfort to you? What do you think would happen if people, even those who aren’t terminally ill, started speaking more openly about death?

Courtesy of [penguinrandomhouse.com](http://penguinrandomhouse.com)