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THE SOLDIER'S WIFE

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 hachette

The Soldier's Wife: Reading Group Questions

1. In WWI and WWII, young couples often got married only a short time before the man went away to the front, and frequently hadn't known each other long. Was Ruby wise or silly to marry Jimmy on such short acquaintance?
2. Was it love at first sight, or something else?
3. The legend of men's 'mateship' was, after WWI, strongly entwined with the ANZAC story. In Australian colonial literature, men's friendships were presented as stronger and more loyal than women's jealous and shallow friendships. Ruby and Maree's relationship contradicts this. Has the way women's friendships are shown in popular culture changed over time?
4. Were you surprised by how long it took Ruby and Maree to get on a first name basis?
5. Do you think Ruby 'handled' Mr Curry correctly? When he first hears the news about Lawrence, he wants to keep working, to 'keep busy'. Would the outcome have been any different for him if he had done so – if Ruby hadn't interfered?
6. Most accounts of women working in WWI seem to assume that all the women wanted to work and were delighted to move into the 'men's world'. But how many were feminists by conviction rather than circumstance?
7. Is Jimmy wrong in wanting to be the main breadwinner of their family?
8. Most families have relatives who fought WWI, WWII or Vietnam. How have those conflicts affected your own family?
9. Do you think Tom would have joined up if Ruby showed interest in him?
10. Would you have chased Jimmy to the bridge or let him escape from his pain as Mr Curry suggests?