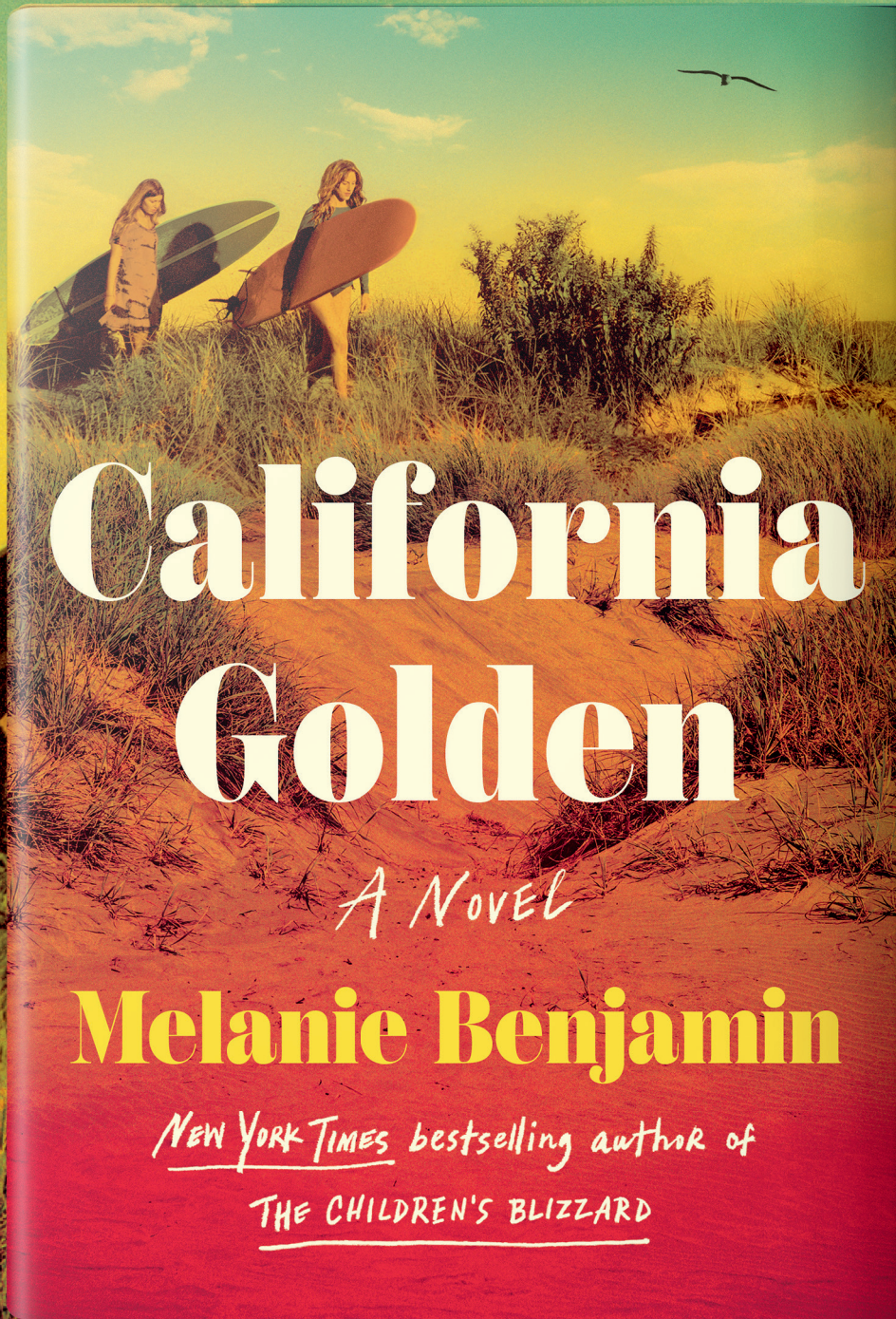


Book Club Kit



California Golden

A NOVEL

Melanie Benjamin

NEW YORK TIMES bestselling author of

THE CHILDREN'S BLIZZARD

Discussion Questions

Spoilers ahead . . .

1. *California Golden* explores a number of themes, including family, loyalty, ambition, and reconciling societal norms with individual desires. Which theme resonates the most deeply with you, and why?
2. Mindy and Ginger's parents never treated them well as kids and always involved them in their arguments. In what ways do you think this shaped Mindy and Ginger as individuals? How do you see this impact them throughout the rest of the story?
3. Despite a caring husband and loving daughters, Carol resented—and resisted—the traditional life in front of her. Why do you think that is? What could she have done differently? What would you have done if you were in her shoes?
4. Mindy and Ginger grow apart and live completely different lives. Why do you think they didn't stay in contact with one another? How do you think their lives might have been different if they hadn't fallen out of touch?
5. Ginger goes through so much pain in her life with no real support. Why do you think she was so attached to Tom even though he treated her so badly?
6. What does this novel tell you about love and friendship from family?
7. Do you think surfing serves as a metaphor in *California Golden*? What do you think it means?
8. If you were in Mindy's shoes and found out your sister had had a baby with your significant other, would your reaction have been the same as Mindy's? Do you think Mindy made the right choice raising the baby with Jimmy?
9. The Donnelly girls were a big thing in the surfing community (the "Fabulous Donnelly Girls!"), but they never seem to think of themselves as so. Why do you think that is?
10. Melanie Benjamin is known for grounding her novels in historically rich settings, and *California Golden* is set in the '60s, a time of significant cultural shifts and events. In what ways do we see the positive cultural changes at play, and what ways do we see the negative?
11. How do you feel about how the story ended? Do you feel the author was trying to leave you with any specific message?