

NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION READING IN COMMON

A PEARL in the STORM

*"Journeys like this are not about
what we get out of them, but rather,
they are about what we give, and
in giving so much to life, we
learn the vast expanse of wealth
we have at hand."*



LECTURE & BOOK SIGNING WITH AUTHOR TORI MURDEN MCCLURE

Thursday, September 19, 2013

7 p.m. | Christ Chapel

Free and open to the public

gustavus.edu/orientation/ReadingInCommon

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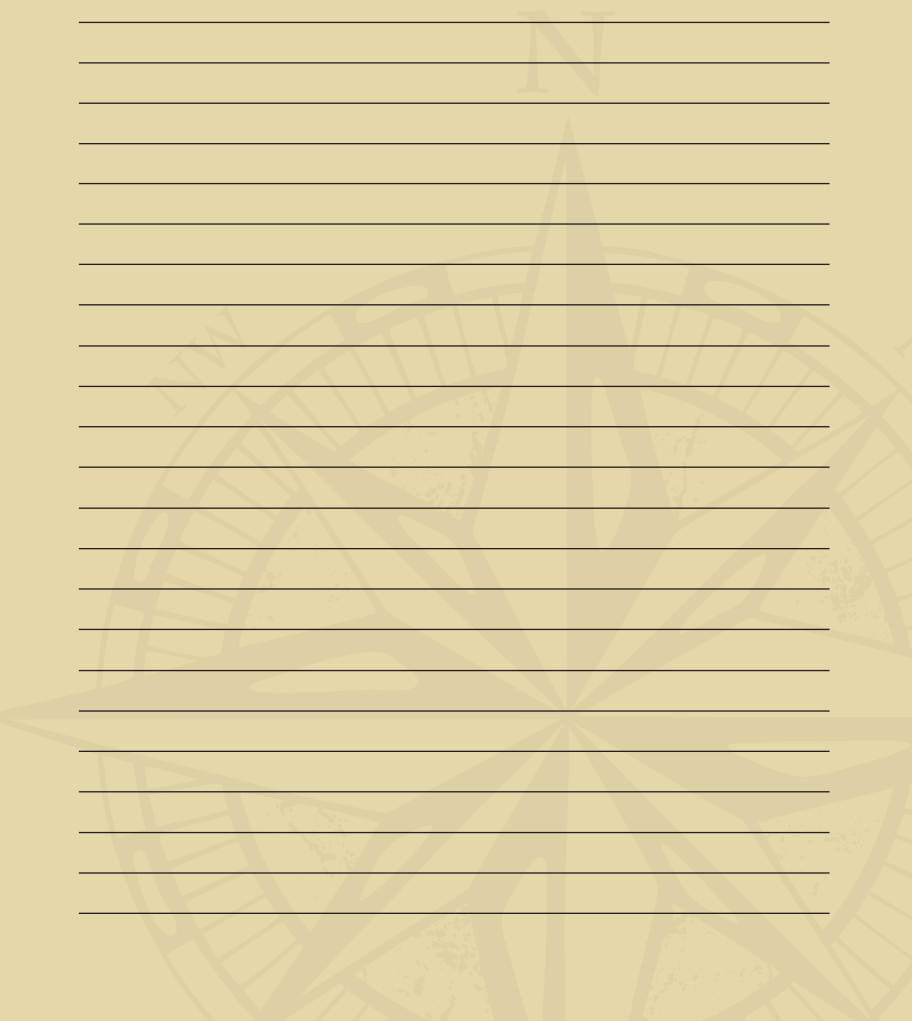
GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS COLLEGE

SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What does the title *A Pearl in the Storm* mean? What are the pearls Tori Murden McClure refers to?
2. Humility, tenacity, courage, knowledge, pain, anger, despair, and hope are all themes of the book. How are they manifested individually in the story? How are they connected?
3. The author responded to critics with a question of her own. “How are we human beings to progress without testing our limits or going behind what is known?” How would you answer her?
4. “I didn’t expect the Atlantic to make me a better person. But I did expect the Atlantic to make me a wiser person,” Tori writes. Did her journey make her wiser? Did she underestimate her expectations—did it make her a better person as well?
5. What is your opinion of Tori? How would you describe her? Did your view of her change through the course of the book?
6. Would Tori have come under such scrutiny for her ambitions if she’d been a man? Why is there still a double standard when it comes to the achievements of men and women? Do you think she is a good role model for both girls and boys?
7. Talk about her childhood and her relationship with her brother Lamar. How did it shape her life and lead her to a solo venture across the Atlantic?
8. Throughout the memoir, Tori speaks of “helplessness.” Why is this so crucial to her? Why does she equate love with helplessness? How does her outlook evolve?
9. Tori took a number of books, music, and even portraits of the presidents. Why did she choose these items? If you were to undertake a journey like this, what might you take?
10. During the trip, the author listens to a lecture about Aristotle and ponders the relationship between courage and knowledge. “Aristotle believed that humanity is influenced more by fear than it is by faith.” Do you agree with this? How do courage and knowledge relate to fear and faith?
11. For months after the attempt, the author harbored shame for having “failed.” Why do you think she so firmly held this opinion of herself?
12. What impact did the journey across the Atlantic ultimately have on the author? What lessons did you take away from *A Pearl in the Storm*?

NOTES, QUOTES, & THOUGHTS FROM MY READING:

Lined area for notes, quotes, and thoughts from reading.



ROWING TERMINOLOGY:

PARTS OF A BOAT: DIRECTIONAL

BOW (rhymes with “cow”)

The bow is the front of a boat—the part that crosses the finish line first. Since rowers are seated facing backward, the bow of the boat is behind them.

PORT

Port is the left side of the boat when facing the bow. Port is on the rower’s right.

STARBOARD

Starboard is the right side of the boat when facing the bow. Starboard is on the rower’s left.

STERN

The stern is the back end of the boat. The stern of the boat is in front of the rower. On the American Pearl, a stern cabin held the sleeping quarters.

PARTS OF A BOAT: FUNCTIONAL

COCKPIT

The area is a shell that holds the rower(s) and houses the seat, the tracks, and the footstretcher.

DECK

The deck of the boat includes the covered portions of the bow and stern.

FOOTSTRETCHER OR STRETCHER

The footstretcher is an adjustable bracket in the bottom of the rowing shell. Shoes are attached to the bracket, giving rowers a way to secure their feet while rowing.

GUNWALE (rhymes with “tunnel”)

The gunwale is the top edge of the shell around the cockpit. The riggers are secured to the gunwale with bolts.

OARLOCK

Mounted at the end of the rigger, the oarlock is a u-shaped swivel that holds the oar in position. The oarlock is the pivot point for the oar.

RIGGER

The rigger is the metal bracing attached to the side of the boat, which holds the oarlock. The oar passes through the oarlock which acts as a pivot point.

