

About *Becoming Bonnie*

Few details are known about Bonnie's life prior to meeting her infamous partner. In *Becoming Bonnie*, Jenni L. Walsh shows a young woman promised the American dream and given the Great Depression, and offers a compelling account of why she fell so hard for a convicted felon—and turned to crime herself.

Photo Credit: April Ziegler Photography



JENNI L. WALSH, has spent the past decade enticing readers as an award-winning advertising copywriter. Her passion lies in transporting readers to another world, be it in historical or contemporary settings. She is a proud graduate of Villanova University, and lives in the Philly 'burbs with her husband, daughter, son, and goldendoodle.

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“Jenni Walsh delivers an intriguing insight into the life of one half of the infamous duo, Bonnie and Clyde. I look forward to reading more from this new author.”

—Hazel Gaynor, *New York Times* bestselling author

“A compelling account of a nation and a life in disarray... an account so vivid you would think you were there with her.”

—Lauren Willig, *New York Times* bestselling author

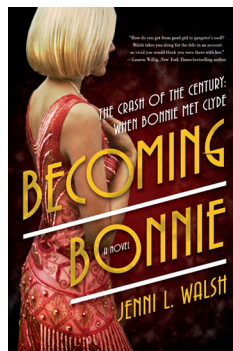


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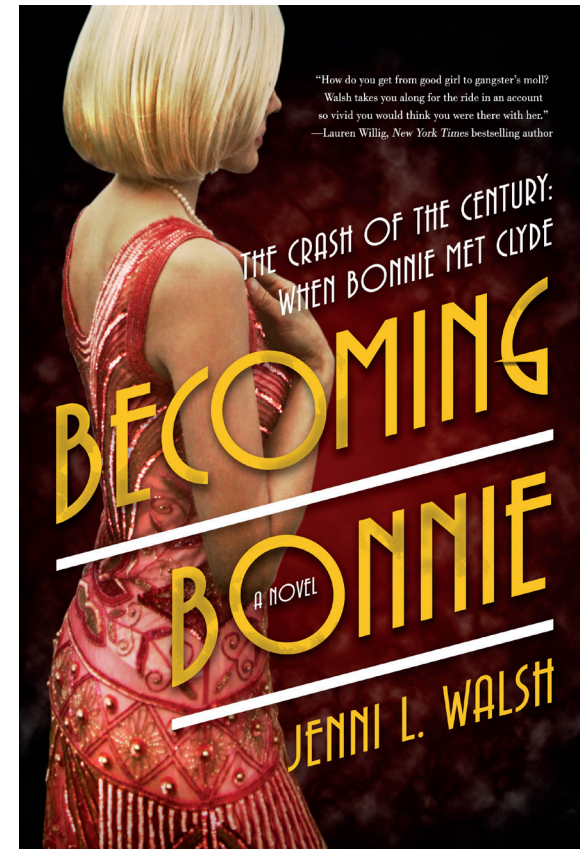
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Hardcover and eBook



READING GROUP GUIDE



“A dazzling and compulsively-readable adventure of self-discovery, with a voice both singular and irresistible.”

—Lee Kelly,
author of *City of Savages*



Questions

Travel back to the height of the Roaring Twenties to meet Bonnelyn Parker before she takes to a life of crime and find out how a young woman, who was promised the American dream and given the Great Depression, fell so hard for a convicted felon—and turned to crime herself.

1. If you faced the same situation as Bonnelyn—with overdue bills, the potential loss of her dreams, and the loss of jobs, both her own and Buster's—would you agree or disagree with her ultimate mindset that doing nothing, letting it all slip away, is more dangerous and reckless than going with Blanche to Doc's?
 2. What do you think was Bonnie's main motivation for her actions? Her family's wellbeing? Living up to her father's expectations? The fear of being nothing more than Mrs. Roy Thornton? Having money and dreams?
 3. Throughout the novel, Roy went through his own transformation. Do you side more with Bonnie, who believed she “broke him,” or Blanche, who agrees Bonnie introduced him to a new world, but otherwise Roy reaped what he sowed?
 4. Evaluate the idea of worry as a catalyst. Bonnie believed, “It's a peculiar thing, worry. It can morph into paranoia or disguise itself as guiltiness, sometimes even creates doubt.” In addition to Bonnie's “Ma looks different” fears and a “Don't let Roy be mad at me doubts,” what other worries do you think drove Bonnie's actions?
 5. During the 1920s, women took a stride forward. As Bonnie said, “Women can vote; women are equals, wanting to make a name for themselves.” How do you think Bonnie would feel about women equality today?
 6. When Bonnie cut her hair, it was an assertion of independence that ultimately gave Bonnie more confidence in herself. Share a similar moment from your own life.
 7. Consider what you look for in a friendship. Which attributes of Blanche would you welcome and alternatively find frustrating in a friendship?
 8. When Bonnie first met Clyde, she was hesitant. Which moment with Clyde do you feel was the moment that made her fall for a convicted felon?
 9. Bonnie feels that Clyde is a partner, having both saved each other. How does this differ from the relationship she had with Roy and her interactions with Henry?
 10. At the beginning of the novel, Blanche believes Bonnelyn is a blotter, someone who goes surface deep, but “life needs some elbow grease, a good scrub to get the dirt out.” At the end of the novel, do you think Blanche would use this same term to refer to Bonnie? How does Bonnelyn compare to Bonnie?
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