**The National Danish Book Club, April 2023**

Dear book loving friends,

This month, we are again trying something new. In March, we discovered that it was, indeed, possible to have an engaging and exciting discussion about short stories from a collection of such, and this month we are reading a Memoir that definitely rocks the boat.

Reading about the darker side of life in what is commonly called “the outskirts of Denmark” or “the rotten banana,” in this case, Lolland south of Sjælland, we follow the life of a young girl, starting at age 3, and ending with her present-day activities as an author, lecturer, and activist.

It is a fairly short book, but it is not always easy to read as the very graphically described situations are thought-provoking as well as disheartening. Ultimately, however, her book is a testimony that stimulates action. It could be used as a political manifesto, and I sincerely hope we will get a good and insightful discussion of the book, maybe even reaching some optimistic conclusions about how to avoid similar scenarios in the future.

Desiree is working on setting up an interview with the author that will be shared before our discussion if all goes as planned.

I look forward to seeing you all on **April 11** for a discussion of ***Anger is my Middle Name.***

Here are some questions to ponder as you read – and, as always, do add your own.

1)What do you think is the purpose with the Prologue? And what is the purpose of the book?

**1968-71:**  
2) What are the most important things that happen? Her living conditions are quite confusing, so it might be useful to keep a summary in mind about where she is, with whom, and what she is doing throughout her story.

3) What is the level of information among the persons, and how much do the kids know?

**1971-72:**  
4) How do the kids find out about Jan and their new life?

5) How is the life of the children and their relationships to the adults (mother, father, Anita, Jan)?

**1972-74:**  
6) How is life on Lolland, and how is school for Lisbeth?

7) Why do they have a caseworker?

8) How is the relationship among the kids?

9) Why does the violence escalate and also include their mom, and how is drinking defining their lives?

10) Why is Lisbeth worried about her mom and Jan disappearing, and how does her fear manifest itself?

11) What is the significance of Jan’s mother and her visits?

**1975-77:**  
12) What is Mogens’ problem, and is he nice or not nice?

13) How do the kids judge people and react to adults fighting?

14) Do you feel she is succeeding as an author with her child’s point of view?

**1977-78:**  
15) How is her time with Grethe, and why is she intimidated?

16) Whys is she sent to an orphanage?

17) What characterizes her childhood? The people, the actions, her introduction to sex?

**1979-80:**  
18) Describe the mother’s patterns in life.

19) How does Lisbeth survive her daily life, and how does she find agency at the age of 12?

**1980-81:**  
20) Does it make sense that Lisbeth is stubborn and easily enraged? Is her development to be expected- with school, friends, and the gym?

21) How is the orphanage detrimental to her further development? Why is it not helping her?

22) How is her perspective changing at this time, and why?

23) How does her relationship with her mother change at this time?

**1982-83:**  
24) How is her relationship with her dad at this point, and why?

25) What is changing in her school experience and what is the effect on her?

26) How does sex change her view of herself and the world? Is this healthy and/or relatable?

27) How do reading and education define her?

**1983-84:**  
28) Why is it important to talk about shame?

29) Why is she so lonely and angry at Rigmor, and how does she work through her traumas?

**Conclusion:**  
30) How do you feel about her five points, and do you have anything to add?