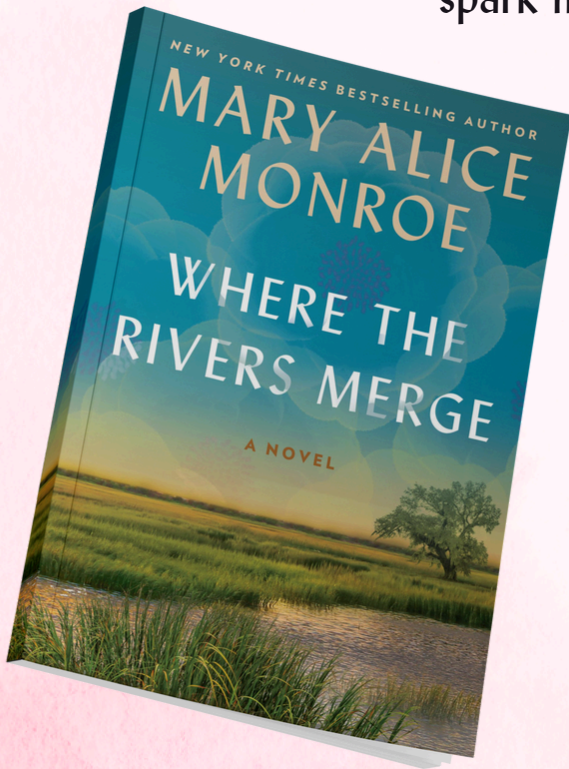


BOOK CLUB KIT





for readers of 'Where the Rivers Merge'
by Mary Alice Monroe

Welcome to your exclusive Where the Rivers Merge Book Club Kit

A curated companion to deepen your reading experience and spark meaningful discussion.

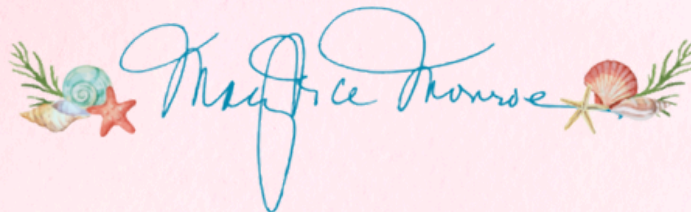


Inside this **downloadable packet**, you'll find everything you need to bring the **spirit of the Lowcountry** to your gathering:

-  Book Club Discussion Questions to explore themes, characters, and pivotal moments.
-  Recipes inspired by the novel—perfect for hosting a Southern-style soirée.
-  A Spotify Playlist filled with soulful Southern roots music and chapter-inspired songs.
-  The Rivers Family Tree to help keep track of the generations that shape this unforgettable story.

Whether you're meeting on the porch with sweet tea in hand or gathering virtually across the miles, **we hope this kit helps set the tone for a book club experience as rich and memorable as the story itself.**

Happy reading,



Where the Rivers Merge by Mary Alice Monroe

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1

Where the Rivers Merge begins not within the stately halls of Mayfield, but in the belly of a great oak on Mayfield land. **Why is Eliza drawn to this sanctuary?** In the novel, Eliza thinks, “A sanctuary is a haven of refuge. People tend to find such places in time of need.” **What does taking refuge mean in this novel? How is the oak tree similar to Mayfield for her? Has there been a place of refuge in your own life?**

2

Eliza expresses her love for Mayfield through her enduring desire to protect it, both as a willful young girl and as a fierce woman. **How does love for a place differ from love for a person? How is protecting a place different from protecting a person?**

3

The author begins each chapter with information about wildlife, plants, and geographical features of South Carolina. **How do these interact with the narrative’s tone, themes, and plot? What do you think these epigraphs add to the story?**

4

One of the central features of Mayfield’s house is the large mural in the dining room. Eliza uses this mural as a lens through which to share Mayfield’s history with the next generation of women. **What scenes would be depicted in your own mural?**

5

Birds play an integral role in the narrative. Covey's name means "a small flock," or "company, group." In the letters Hugh and Heyward send to Eliza and Covey, they write of the birds they encounter. As children, these characters are brought together by the bird hospital established by Wilton. **In what ways do the birds in *Where the Rivers Merge* represent the characters and their relationships?**

6

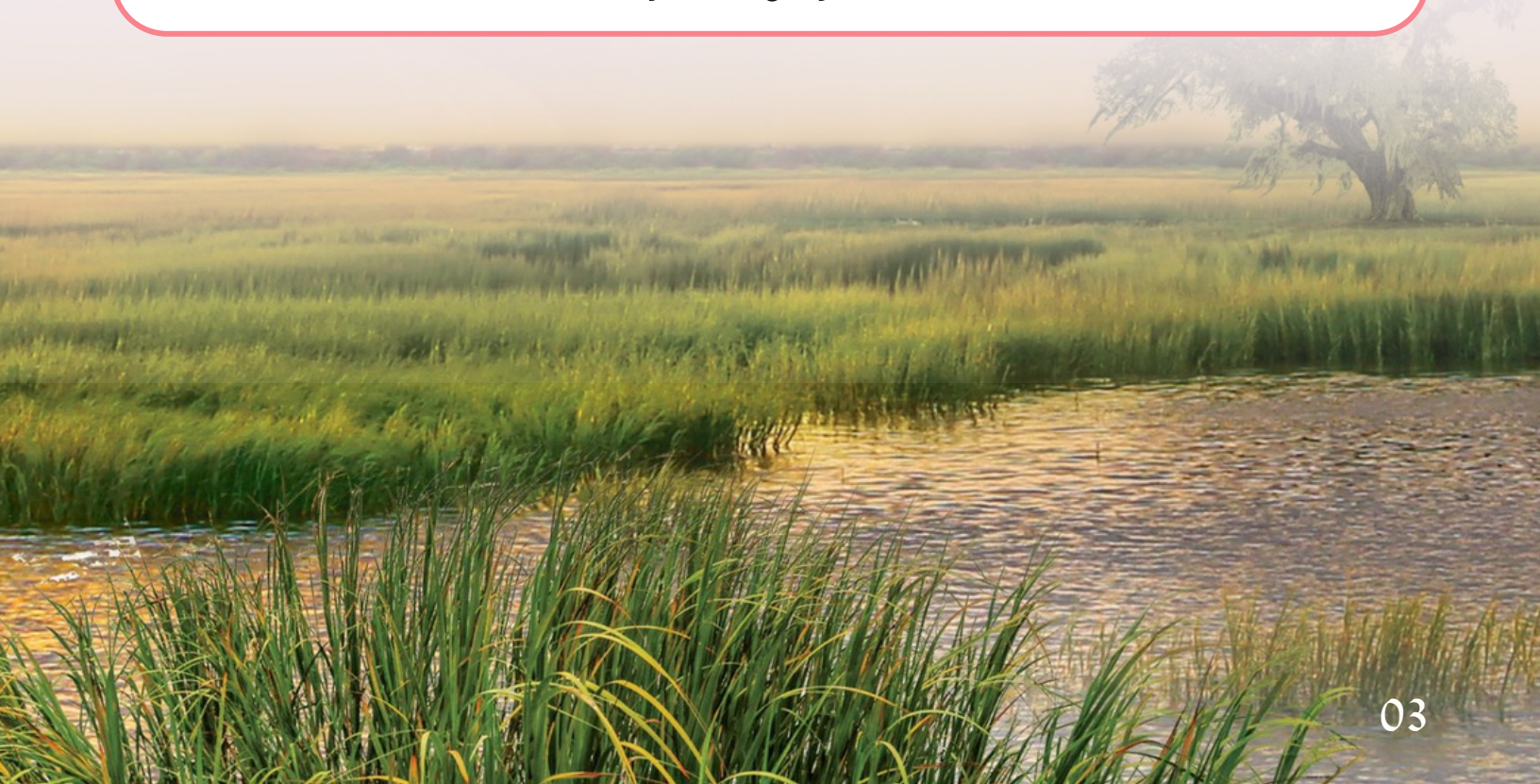
In a moment of desperation, Eliza tells a secret that is not hers to share. **How did her decision make you feel? How did it change the course of the story? Have you ever been confided in by someone whose secret was not theirs to share, and how did this change your relationships?**

7

The threat of the Jim Crow South is a constant throughout the novel, in Charleston and also at Mayfield. **How does that impact the relationship between the two women friends, Covey and Eliza?** Discuss how Eliza, a white character, could not fully understand what Covey, a black character, faced in terms of threats and worries.

8

Where the Rivers Merge examines the power, pain, and sacrifice of belonging to and upholding family lineage. **How do race and gender identity affect the agency of characters in the novel? What do the families in the novel reveal about what it means to carry on a legacy?**



9

Primogeniture is the right of succession belonging to the firstborn child, in which the whole real estate of a deceased parent is passed to the eldest son. Primogeniture was not a legal principal in the United States at the time of the novel, but some of the landed gentry, such as the Rivers, still held to it. By concentrating inheritance in the hands of the eldest son, primogeniture prevents the division of land and property into smaller parcels over generations. This can help maintain the economic viability and influence of the estate.

Discuss the pros and cons of primogeniture in feudal and modern times.

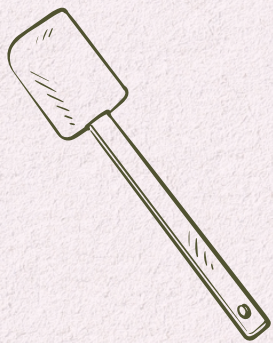
10

Eliza at 88 years of age had faced a lifetime of being thwarted because of her gender. From childhood chores to women's political rights, social expectations, and later business, we see the toll it took on the woman. **Discuss the difference between the free- spirited young girl and the hardened, even cold old woman we met at the beginning of the book.** As Eliza tells the stories of her youth, **did you witness the melting of the ice as connections are made with the two young women and hope begins to stir?** Discuss the subtle changes in Eliza through the story and the power of memories and family support to shift emotions.

11

Norah and Savannah each has her own issues and reasons for deciding to come to Mayfield. Discuss these women and how the stories they are hearing of their ancestors might change their relationship with Eliza, Mayfield, and each other. **How do the stories of our past, even our genetic memory, influence us? Does your family share stories of previous generations?**





RECIPES

Inspired by the Book



Peach Pie

(Lowcountry Style)



Key Local Ingredient:

South Carolina peaches



Crust:

2½ cups all-purpose flour
1 tsp salt
1 tbsp sugar
1 cup cold butter (diced)
6–8 tbsp ice water



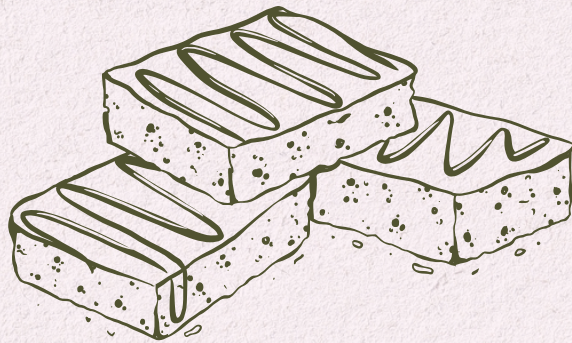
Filling:

6–8 ripe SC peaches, peeled and sliced
¾ cup sugar
2 tbsp cornstarch
1 tsp lemon juice
½ tsp cinnamon
Pinch of nutmeg
1 tbsp butter



Directions:

Toss peach slices with sugar, lemon juice, spices, and cornstarch. Let sit 20 minutes. Roll dough, fill, dot with butter, top with lattice, and bake at 375°F for 45–50 minutes until golden and bubbling.



Southern Tea Cakes & Petits Fours



Key Local Ingredient:

SC honey , farm eggs, and local jam



Tea Cakes:

½ cup butter
1 cup sugar
1 egg
½ tsp vanilla
2 cups flour
½ tsp baking soda
¼ tsp salt
Splash of buttermilk



Directions:

Cream butter/sugar, beat in egg and vanilla. Mix dry ingredients separately , combine all. Chill dough, roll out, and cut. Bake at 350°F for 8-10 minutes. Soft and simple, these are great with jam or lemon glaze.



Petit Fours (Shortcut):

Use pound cake cut into small squares, brush with local peach preserves, top with poured fondant or a lemon glaze. Garnish with candied mint or edible flowers from your garden.



Homemade Lemonade & Peach Iced Tea



Key Local Ingredient:

Local honey , SC peaches,
fresh mint



Lemonade:

1 cup lemon juice (about
4-6 lemons)
½ cup local honey
4 cups water
Lemon slices + mint to
garnish



Peach Tea:

4 black tea bags
3 ripe peaches, sliced
½ cup sugar or honey
6 cups water



Directions:

Simmer peaches in 2 cups of water with
sugar/honey for 10 minutes. Steep tea in
remaining water. Strain peaches and mix
with tea. Serve over ice.



Shrimp and Grits

(Lowcountry Classic)



Ingredients:

1 lb local shrimp (peeled & deveined)
1 cup stone-ground grits
2 cups milk + 2 cups water
1 cup sharp white cheddar
½ lb andouille or local sausage
1 small onion + bell pepper
Butter, garlic, and a splash of hot sauce



Key Local Ingredient:

Wild-caught SC shrimp, stone-ground grits, local andouille



Directions:

Cook grits in milk/water until creamy; stir in cheese. Sauté sausage and veg, add shrimp, season with salt, pepper, garlic, and a dash of lemon or sherry. Spoon over hot grits.



Buttermilk Biscuits + Mustard Spread



Key Local Ingredient:

Local buttermilk, SC stone-ground flour, local mustard



Mustard Spread:

¼ cup Dijon or local mustard
1 tbsp honey
2 tbsp mayo



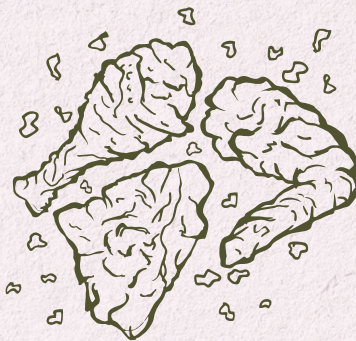
Biscuits:

2 cups self-rising flour
½ cup cold butter
¾ cup local buttermilk
Bake at 450°F for 12 minutes



Optional:

Finely chopped herbs
Whisk and serve with hot biscuits



Sweet Water Pond Picnic

Inspired by a scenic family spread in the story—simple, portable, & Southern.



Fried Chicken:

Soak chicken overnight in buttermilk + hot sauce
Dredge in seasoned flour (paprika, garlic powder, salt/pepper)
Fry in peanut oil until golden and 165°F internal



Biscuit Bar:

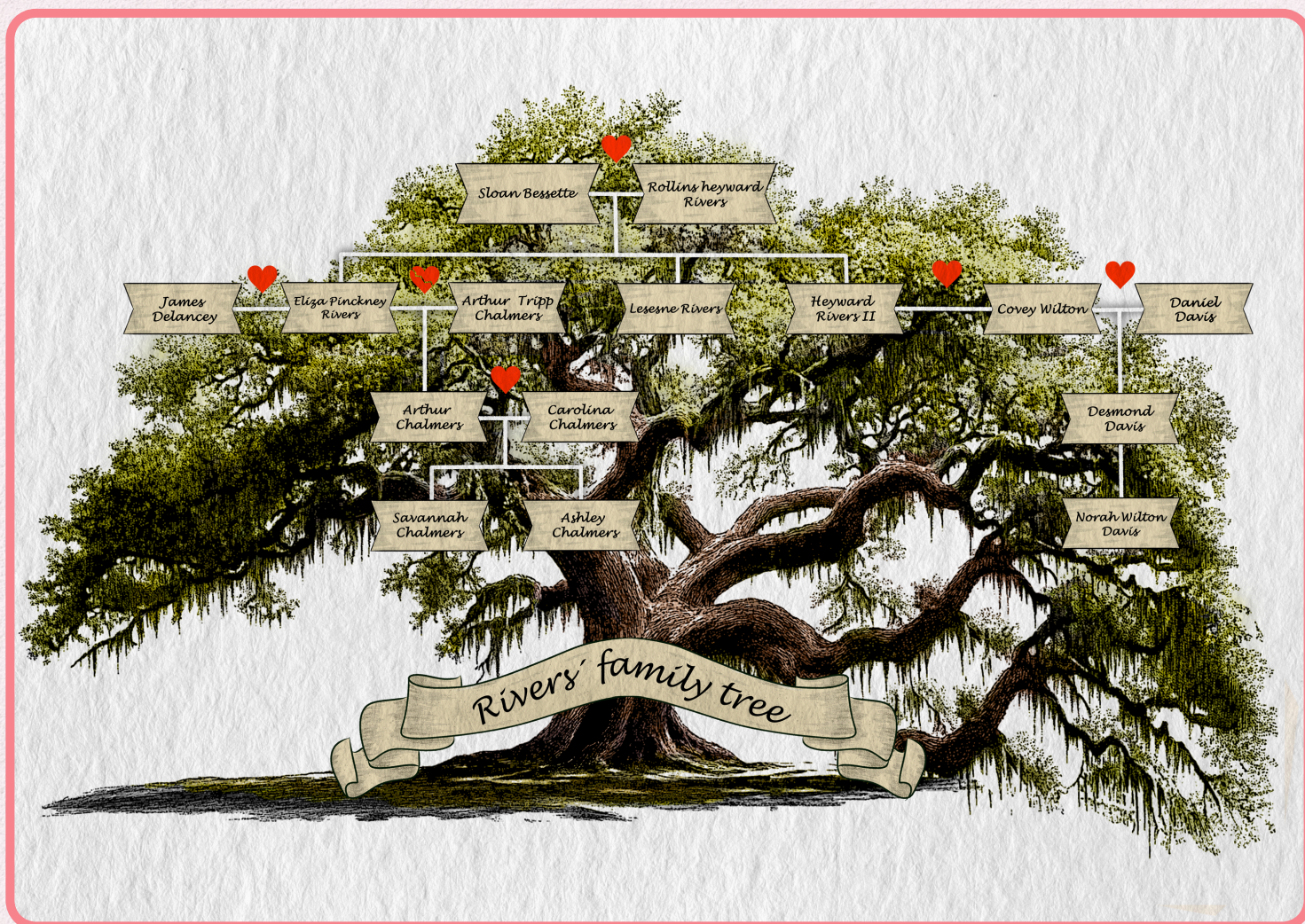
Homemade biscuits topped with choice of:
- Pimento Cheese (made with SC sharp cheddar)
- Cucumber & dill (with local cream cheese)
- Butter + local honey
- Local mustard + ham
- Local Jam (whatever is in season!)



Extras:

Chilled SC muscadine grapes
Deviled eggs with local relish
Hand pies or tea cakes for dessert

RIVERS' FAMILY TREE



SPOTIFY PLAYLIST

Click to listen to a soulful blend of Southern roots music and chapter-inspired songs from *Where the Rivers Merge*. Blues, folk, spirituals, and Lowcountry sounds bring the story—and its legacy—to life.

Or scan the QR Code!

