

(Author's Angle.2.12.09)

Jodi Picoult on Book Clubs

Jodi is the author of 15 novels—all with controversial topics plucked straight from the headlines. She is also known for her plot twists, turns, and unforgettable characters. A couple of years ago, my book club, *Readers in the Hood*, was able to sit down and chat with Jodi about her writing life, her travel life, and specifically about *My Sister's Keeper*, which was our current month's book. (Not only did *Readers* give it two pom pom shakes, but also *BookBrowse.com* readers voted *My Sister's Keeper* number one in their 2005 survey.) In follow-up correspondence, Jodi left me with this great book club quote:

“Okay, I admit it: I've never been an Oprah pick. And yet, Oprah did more for my career than any other single person I've never met...by making it cool to read again. The advent of book clubs, made popular by Oprah and her endorsement of reading, has created a growing venue for my novels—all of which center on topics that never seem to settle in black and white, but mostly in the shades of gray. Over the years, hundreds of book clubs have met me in person at my readings and signings. Some have been online book clubs, with the members meeting for the first time face to face. Some take pictures with me, and put them in a scrapbook. Some tell me what discussion strategies they used to discuss my story; some beg me for an explanation of the ending of the novel; some tell me what wine or dessert they served. What I've learned is that there are as many different kinds of book clubs as there are readers—with one constant: in some capacity, a book has gotten them talking. And since that's what I hope for when I start writing...I couldn't ask for a happier ending.”

Jodi is getting ready to embark on her *Handle with Care* tour in March. Check out her calendar at jodipicoult.com and try to catch her—trust me—it will be worth it!

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