

## Girl Before a Mirror

William Morrow Paperbacks

By Liza Palmer

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### Introduction

The author of *Conversations with a Fat Girl*—optioned for HBO—returns with the hilarious and heartfelt story of a woman who must learn how to be the heroine of her own life—a journey that will teach her priceless lessons about love, friendship, family, work, and her own heart.

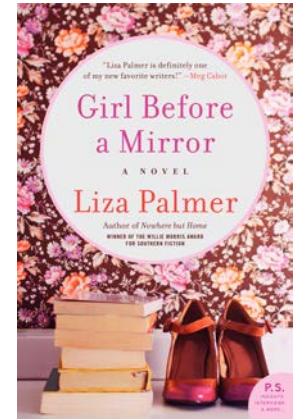
An account executive in a *Mad Men* world, Anna Wyatt is at a crossroads. Recently divorced, she's done a lot of emotional housecleaning, including a self-imposed dating sabbatical. But now that she's turned forty, she's struggling to figure out what her life needs. Brainstorming to win over an important new client, she discovers a self-help book—*Be the Heroine, Find Your Hero*—that offers her unexpected insights and leads her to a most unlikely place: a romance writers' conference. If she can sign the Romance Cover Model of the Year Pageant winner for her campaign—and meet the author who has inspired her to take control of her life—she'll win the account.

For Anna, taking control means taking chances, including getting to know Sasha, her pretty young colleague on the project, and indulging in a steamy elevator ride with Lincoln Mallory, a dashing financial consultant she meets in the hotel. When the conference ends, Anna and Lincoln must decide if their intense connection is strong enough to survive outside the romantic fantasy they've created. Yet Lincoln is only one of Anna's dilemmas. Now that her campaign is off the ground, others in the office want to steal her success, and her alcoholic brother, Ferdie, is spiraling out of control.

To have the life she wants—to be happy without guilt, to be accepted for herself, to love and to be loved, to just be—she has to put herself first, accept her imperfections, embrace her passions, and finally be the heroine of her own story.

### Questions for Discussion

1. Why do you think the author chose the Mozart quote to set the tone for her book? Why distinguish that love is at the soul of genius?
2. What does Sasha's line mean: "You want to truly understand a culture? Just record what they read when they think no one is looking."
3. What does Just Be mean to you?
4. Do you think Anna is right – that broken people make the best heroes? Why?



5. Addiction plays a big part in *Girl Before a Mirror*. While Ferdie and Lincoln battle with substance abuse, it's Anna's addiction to control, which is at the heart of the book. Discuss.
6. Do you tend to make decisions with your head or your heart? What would happen if the other were in charge?
7. Lincoln said it himself, that all of his scars are on the outside. Is he correct? So why does he say it?
8. Why do you think women as an audience are so chronically degraded and dismissed?
9. Do you agree with Helen when she asks: "See now, why does pleasure have to be guilty?"
10. Have you ever distanced yourself from something you liked just because others wouldn't think it was cool? Was it ever worth it?