

# blue plate special

by Michelle D. Kwasney

## READING GROUP QUESTIONS

1. Madeline uses food as a way to give herself comfort. What do you do when you're scared, lonely or sad and need comfort? Is what you choose healthy for your body and spirit?
2. It's hard for us to imagine what our mothers and grandmothers were like as teenagers. If you had the chance to travel back in time and meet your mom or grandma when they were your age, would you do it? What questions would you ask them?
3. Ariel's boyfriend Shane seems sweet and attentive at first, but then turns scary and controlling. Have you ever been in a relationship—someone you dated or a friend—that changed over time? How did you handle it?
4. Muralee takes Madeline into her confidence, crossing outside the bounds of her popular clique. Why do you think Muralee felt she could trust Madeline? Have you every reached outside of your social circle to connect with someone?
5. Desiree's boyfriend Jeremy takes drastic action when he learns the truth about Larry. How do you feel about what he did? What other choices could he have made?
6. Ariel spends less time with her best friend Olivia when she starts dating Shane. Has a friend ever done this to you? How did you feel? Did you feel hurt, or did you understand? Have you ever stopped spending time with your friends when you started a new relationship?
7. Which of the main characters, Madeline, Ariel, Desiree, is most like you? Which is least like you? What are the qualities about them you admire? Are there things they did that made you angry? Fearful for them? Confused?
8. Madeline, Desiree and Ariel were all raised in homes without fathers. How has being raised with or without a dad influenced you? How do you think their lives might have been different if their dads had been around?
9. In a diner, a "Blue Plate Special" is usually created from leftovers served as a new meal. For Ariel, Desiree and Madeline, the *Blue Plate Special* consists of the leftovers from each of their mother's lives, which they are forced to deal with in the present. What leftovers fill your plate? How do you feel about your choices?