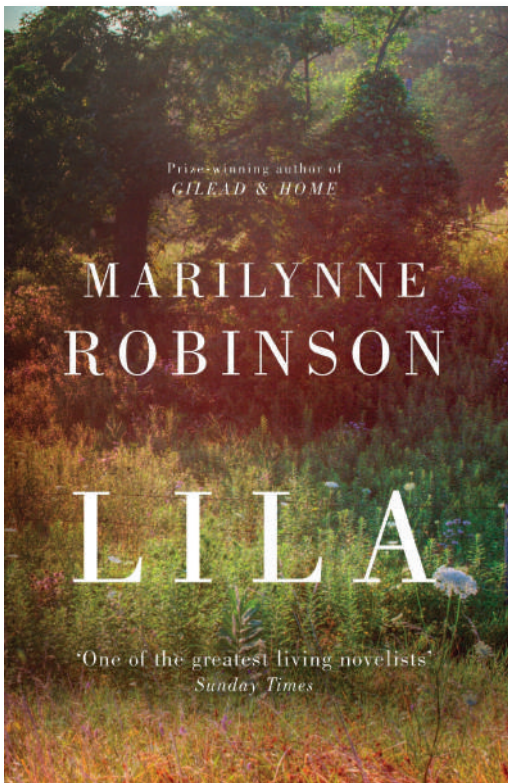


Reader's Guide



Other novels by Marilynne Robinson

Housekeeping (1981)

Gilead (2004)

Home (2008)

Lila Marilynne Robinson

Virago

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About the author

The American novelist and essayist Marilynne Robinson was born in November 1943 and grew up in Sandpoint, Idaho. She attended Pembroke College, the former women's college at Brown University, receiving her B.A., magna cum laude in 1966, where she was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. She received her Ph.D. in English from the University of Washington in 1977.

Robinson has written three highly acclaimed novels: *Housekeeping* which won the Hemingway Foundation/PEN Award for best first novel, the National Book Critics Circle Award for Fiction, the Ambassador Book Award and the 2006 Louisville Grawemeyer Award in Religion and was nominated for the 1982 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction; *Gilead*, which won the 2005 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and *Home*, which won the Orange Prize for Fiction 2009.

Lila

Neglected as a toddler, Lila was rescued by Doll. Together they craft a life on the run, living hand-to-mouth with nothing but their sisterly bond. But despite bouts of petty violence and moments of desperation, their shared life is laced with moments of joy and love. When Lila arrives in Gilead, she struggles to harmonise the life of her makeshift family and their days of hardship, and to forget the shame of her past, until a chance meeting, and an unlikely attachment, changes everything.

Revisiting the characters and setting of Marilynne Robinson's *Gilead* and *Home*, *Lila* is a story about a girl living on the fringes of society in fear, awe and wonder.

Discussion points

The novel's opening paragraphs describe the deprivations experienced by young Lila. How do these experiences affect her immersion in the culture of Gilead?

How did your perception of Doll change throughout the novel?

Marilynne Robinson has been described as a sophisticated religious thinker who asks searching questions of her Christian faith. To what extent do you think *Lila* is a meditation on morality?

Trust is a recurring theme in *Lila*. What are the characters' greatest barriers to trust? How is trust distinguished from faith?

What do the closing lines of *Lila* tell us about life, and the absence of life?

Themed reading

William Faulkner *The Yoknapatawpha Country*
Cormac McCarthy *The Road*
William Shakespeare *King Lear*

Useful links

www.themanbookerprize.com
<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/05/magazine/the-revelations-of-marilynne-robinson.html>