



THINGS THAT FALL FROM THE SKY Selja Ahava

Things that Fall from the Sky is a stunning narrative that explores the unexpected and inexplicable nature of reality.

Three lives are changed forever by a series of random events: a young girl loses her mother when a block of ice falls from the sky; a woman wins the jackpot twice; and a man is struck by lightning four times. Selja Ahava weaves together these unique stories in a charming, one-of-a-kind tale about just how far people will go to force life into a logical pattern that they can make sense of.

Things that Fall from the Sky is a story of everyday life. But it is also a meditation on the passing of time, the endurance of love and the pain of loss. This prize-winning novel by one of Finland's best-loved writers is now touching readers' hearts all over the world, painting an unforgettable picture of the unforeseen twists and turns that can define a lifetime.

Questions for Discussion

1. What do you think Selja Ahava is trying to say about fate and our ability to control what happens to us?
2. One of the charms of *Things that Fall from the Sky* is its light, readable tone. Yet the author nonetheless explores substantial themes of love, loss and control in the novel. Why do you think this contrast is so effective?
3. Much of the book is told from Saara's perspective. What do you think Selja Ahava achieves by looking at the impact of a tragic event – the death of Saara's mother – from the perspective of a child? What do you think the novel tells us about the way that children understand the world?
4. Did you enjoy the epistolary style of the second section of *Things that Fall from the Sky*? What were the advantages of using letters to take the reader into the mind of Saara's aunt?
5. In some respects, this novel has the sense of a timeless fairy tale. In your opinion, what creates that style and tone?
6. 'Why? Why? Why Hannele?' Saara's father moans in anguish after his wife's death. What do you think Selja Ahava is trying to say about our constant need to understand and explain the course of events?

7. In *Things that Fall from the Sky* we see unexpected, unpredictable events bringing together characters who might otherwise never have met. Discuss these 'friendships of chance', and the theme of friendship more broadly in the novel.
8. 'The world goes on. Nothing becomes clear, but time heals and people forget.' To what extent do you agree with these words at the very end of the novel? What ideas did you take from your reading about the restorative nature of time?
9. *Things that Fall from the Sky* opens with an epigraph from Aristotle. How do you think this quote fits in with the text as a whole, and what do you think Selja Ahava was trying to say by prefacing her novel with this quote?
10. Krista is pregnant at the end of the book. Think about ideas of cyclicity and regeneration in the novel. Is this a hopeful note on which to end the book, or is it more complex than that?