

## Discussion Questions for *Boots and Bedlam*

Before we start our discussion on *Boots and Bedlam*, I'd love to have your feedback regarding your reading habits. I'm curious . . . When do you read the most, on the beaches during the summer or snuggled up by a fire in the winter?

I wrote the chapters about Sophia, Jamie's girlfriend, based on my experience with my own children. Not the drugs mind you, but the late night partying and lack of consideration for my schedule. If you are an empty nester, what is the hardest thing for you to adjust to when your children come home for the holidays or the summer? Other parents of teenagers, what drives you the most crazy about their lifestyles?

What do you dread the most about Christmas? For me, it's putting up the tree—stringing the lights, dragging the ornaments down from the attic, the mess, having to water it every day. Yuck. I love the idea of Christmas, just not all the work that goes along with making it happen.

With all the chaos in her life, Sam decided not to put up a tree this year. Of course, Jamie wouldn't let her get away with it. Which is what would happen in my house. We establish traditions, and our children and families expect those traditions to continue from year to year. Do you ever deviate from tradition?

Sam and Eli have been through a lot together. Were you surprised when she accepted his proposal so readily?

Have you ever been to a holiday wedding? My husband proposed to me four days before Christmas in December of 1988. Christmas is a magical time of year. And not just for romance. It's a time of year where dreams come true for all ages. Feel free to share your most magical Christmas memory.

Christmas is also the saddest time of year for many. The death rate rises during the holidays. Many are homeless, hungry and cold and lonely. Others lack the resources to give their families a nice Christmas. What charities do you support during the holidays. In what ways do you reach out to others in need?

I enjoyed writing about the food in *Boots and Bedlam*. My family insists on having the same dishes for our big dinner on Christmas Eve. What are some of your favorite holiday dishes? Post the wedding luncheon menu.

Sam found herself in over her head. Can you remember a time when you've had to jump in and save a sibling from drowning?

On several occasions throughout the book, Sam refrains from reaching for the bottle. In difficult times, what relieves your stress?

Did you see the surprise coming at the end?

Have you ever encountered irresponsible parents like Donna Bennett (Rachel's mother) and Sophia's father?