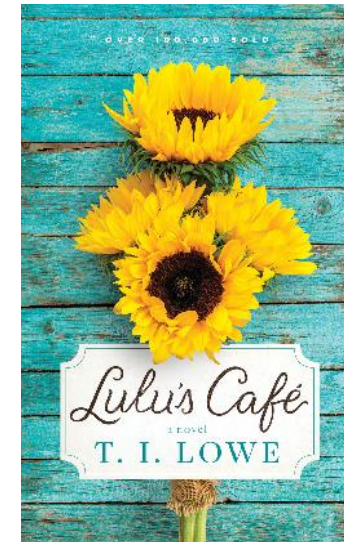


# Lulu's Café

## ———— Book Club Kit ————

Exploring the resiliency of both the heart and the spirit, *Lulu's Café* gorgeously illustrates how old scars can finally heal no matter how deep they seem. \_\_\_\_\_



[www.tilowe.com](http://www.tilowe.com)

# *Praise for Lulu's Café*

"T.I. Lowe has crafted a terrific novel with characters to root for. I thoroughly enjoyed *Lulu's Café* and found myself deeply moved. This author is one to watch!"

**Francine Rivers**

*New York Times* bestselling author of *The Masterpiece*





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## *A Note from the Author*

Christmas is a time to celebrate the birth of our Savior, but Christmas 2011 is one I am ashamed to admit I did not celebrate. I began battling the most treacherous storm of my life during this season. Sitting by my mom's side in an unfamiliar cancer center, I heard words so foreign to me I had to have the doctor repeat them and then spell them for me—"small-cell carcinoma lung cancer." From the doctor's grim expression and cautious words, my mom and I knew she had been handed a death sentence.

I armed myself with research and set out to stand by my mom through rounds of radiation, chemotherapy, blood transfusions, and a barrage of tests and paperwork. I prayed without ceasing, "Please, God. Please heal Momma."

While I begged God for a miracle, a story began to take root in my heart that became my creative outlet when the reality of losing my mom was too great a burden to bear. During endless treatments, I shared some of the story with my mom. She made me promise to share it with the world. And I agreed that one day I would, but not right then. At that point, our focus had to be her and her healing.



## *A Note from the Author*

In spring 2013, God answered my prayer, but not in the way I had envisioned. Rather than healing my mom's body, he healed her soul, freeing her from the abusive past and sinful life that had held her captive for far too long. That healing was the most precious gift I had received since the birth of my children, for my mom had suffered greatly long before the cancer invaded.

In May 2013, *Lulu's Café* was completed. I put the manuscript away for safekeeping and set out to help my mom get her affairs in order before the cancer robbed her of the ability to make decisions. Yes, the cruel disease had rebelled against treatments and had spread.

In summer 2013, I felt devastating pain and anguish I never knew could exist. I had to say goodbye to my mom, and selfishly, I was not ready. Watching her suffer and fade rendered me broken and defeated.

As I held her fragile body during the early evening of September 19, 2013, my mom took her last breath on earth, and I felt my own breath leave me in acute grief.

## *A Note from the Author*

I fell into that grief for several months, not knowing how to resurface. Life kept going without me. My prayers were now for my own healing, for my heart was broken. The past three years had been all about fighting my mom's cancer, and now that the battle was over, I felt lost. I begged God to help me move on.

Finally in January 2014, God said it was time to share *Lulu's Café*. I was scared and didn't feel worthy to share it, but I had made my mom a promise. And I intended on keeping it. Through honoring the memory of my mom and through the strength of my heavenly Father, my broken heart slowly began to heal. I know it will not completely heal while I'm still on this earth, but one day . . .

Since sharing *Lulu's Café*, an abundance of stories have knocked on my heart's door and asked to be shared also. They are not perfect stories, for I am not a perfect woman. But as long as God keeps giving me these stories, I promise to share them.

Thank you for reading and helping me keep my promise to my mom.



# *Lulu's Café Playlist*

- "Fly Away" by Lenny Kravitz
- "Better Man" by Pearl Jam
- "Lightning Crashes" by Live
- "The Joker" by the Steve Miller Band
- "Magic Carpet Ride" by Steppenwolf
- "Say Hey (I Love You)" by Michael Franti & Spearhead
- "Her Diamonds" by Rob Thomas
- "Born Again" by Third Day "
- Home" by Phillip Phillips
- "Walking On Water" by Needtobreathe

# Discussion Questions

1. *Lulu's Café* is not only the book's title but a setting central to the novel. What role does the café play in the plot?
2. *Donuts . . . Donuts make everything better!* Leah turns to food for comfort and Jessup turns to alcohol. Leah was judged for her weight gain, but she herself turns around and judges Jessup. In what ways is this a common practice in our society? Why is that?
3. Leah feels trapped by her abusive husband, Brent, and believes she has no one to turn to. What advice would you have given her? How did reading this book give you a new or better understanding of domestic abuse?



## *Discussion Questions*

4. Discuss the roles of the significant people Leah meets on her life's journey, such as Shayna, the young woman at the donut shop; Dr. Simmons, the obstetrician who gives her a Bible and promises to pray for her; Mona, the nurse in Lincoln; Gina, the hairdresser in Chattanooga; and of course Lulu. Have you ever encountered someone like this at a key point in your life?
5. What factors caused Leah to marry Brent Sadler? Years later, what draws her to Crowley Mason? Compare and contrast the two characters. What steps can you take to make wise relationship choices?

## Discussion Questions

6. Food is a common theme throughout *Lulu's Café*. What were some of your favorite meals in the book?
7. The author paints vivid pictures throughout the book with her descriptive narratives. What was your favorite descriptive scene? Why?
8. What passages from the book especially stand out to you? Why did they make such an impression?



## *Discussion Questions*

9. There's a fine line between sharing too much information in a book and allowing readers some freedom to fill in the blanks as they see fit. Was there a part of the story where you wish the author had shared more?

10. Everyone needs a Lulu, a generous and loving person who seeks out people to help. Do you know a Lulu? How can you try to be a Lulu?

# *Lulu's Café Recipes*

No dish is too bad for you as long as it's served in small portions. These Southern recipes are indulgent and best eaten on special occasions. Certainly not every day. ~Lulu





# Lulu's Pimento Cheese

## Ingredients:

2 c. shredded Colby Jack cheese  
2 c. shredded sharp cheddar cheese  
8 oz. cream cheese, softened  
1/3 c. mayonnaise (preferably Duke's)  
1 jar diced pimentos, drained (4 oz.)  
¼ tsp. ground cayenne pepper  
salt and pepper (I prefer not to add salt)

## Directions:

Add ingredients (except for salt and pepper) into a large mixing bowl. Beat at medium speed until combined. (I used my stand-up mixer with the paddle attachment.) Add salt and pepper to taste.

Serve with crackers. Also a great addition to burgers and sandwiches.



# Crowley's MoonPie Brownies

## Ingredients:

2 boxes Ghirardelli dark chocolate  
brownie mix  
3 eggs  
½ c. cold brew coffee or water  
1 c. vegetable oil  
1 box mini MoonPies, unwrapped  
½ c. mini marshmallows  
½ c. dark chocolate chips

## Directions:

Preheat oven to 350°.

In a mixing bowl, combine brownie mix, eggs, coffee, and oil. Add half of the batter to a greased 9x13 baking pan. Place a layer of MoonPies on top, leaving a little space between each. (They expand while baking.) Pour remaining batter on top. Bake for 35 minutes. Top with marshmallows and chocolate chips and bake for an additional 10 minutes. Let cool and enjoy!





# Leah's Apple Fritter Donut Bread Pudding

## Ingredients:

6 apple fritter  
donuts  
5 eggs  
1½ c. half-and-half  
¾ c. sugar  
2 tsp. vanilla  
extract

## Optional Ingredients: Use

one or all or add your own!  
½ c. chopped pecans or walnuts  
½ c. white chocolate chips  
½ c. butterscotch chips

## Directions:

Preheat oven to 350°.

Cut apple fritters into cubes and place on a baking pan. Toast in oven for 10 minutes. Set aside to cool. Combine remaining ingredients. Whisk or use a hand mixer and beat until slightly frothy. Place fritter cubes in a buttered 9x13 baking dish. Pour custard mixture on top and let stand for 10 minutes. Bake for 45 minutes.

Best if served with a cup of coffee for breakfast or a scoop of vanilla ice cream for dessert.



# Lulu's Café Granola Bars

## Ingredients:

1 pouch oatmeal cookie mix  
(17.5 oz.)  
1 stick unsalted butter,  
softened  
2 eggs  
2 tbsp water  
1 c. old-fashioned oats  
1 c. unsweetened coconut  
flakes  
1 c. slivered almonds  
1 c. white chocolate chips

## Topping:

¼ c. unsweetened coconut  
¼ c. slivered almonds  
¼ c. white chocolate chips  
½ c. your favorite prepared granola  
(I used Kind cinnamon oat clusters)

## Directions:

Preheat oven to 350°.

In a large mixing bowl, combine cookie mix, butter, eggs, water, oats, and coconut. Beat until dough is formed. Fold in almonds and chocolate chips. Place dough in a buttered 9x13 baking dish. Then sprinkle the toppings on top. Bake for 25 minutes. Once cooled, slice into bars and enjoy.

## Fun Tip:

Switch out the coconut, almonds, and white chocolate chips with other nuts, dried fruit, or chips of your choice.



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