**Every Note Played**

**By Lisa Genova**

**About the Book**

An accomplished concert pianist, Richard received standing ovations from audiences all over the world in awe of his rare combination of emotional resonance and flawless technique. Every finger of his hands was a finely calibrated instrument, dancing across the keys and striking each note with exacting precision. That was eight months ago.

Richard now has ALS, and his entire right arm is paralyzed. His fingers are impotent, still, devoid of possibility. The loss of his hand feels like a death, a loss of true love, a divorce—his divorce.He knows his left arm will go next.

Three years ago, Karina removed their framed wedding picture from the living room wall and hung a mirror there instead. But she still hasn’t moved on. Karina is paralyzed by excuses and fear, stuck in an unfulfilling life as a piano teacher, afraid to pursue the path she abandoned as a young woman, blaming Richard and their failed marriage for all of it.

When Richard becomes increasingly paralyzed and is no longer able to live on his own, Karina becomes his reluctant caretaker. As Richard’s muscles, voice, and breath fade, both he and Karina try to reconcile their past before it’s too late.

**About the Author**:

Lisa Genova graduated valedictorian, summa cum laude from Bates College with a degree in Biopsychology and has a Ph.D. in Neuroscience from Harvard University.

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Acclaimed as the Oliver Sacks of fiction and the Michael Crichton of brain science, Lisa has captured a special place in contemporary fiction, writing stories that are equally inspired by neuroscience and the human spirit. She is author of the New York Times bestselling novels, STILL ALICE, LEFT NEGLECTED, LOVE ANTHONY, and INSIDE THE O'BRIENS.

**If you enjoyed this book*:***

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* Nine Perfect Strangers by Liane Moriarty
* Girls Burn Brighter by Shobha Rao
* Everything Here Is Beautiful by Mira T. Lee
* Then She Was Gone by Lisa Jewell

**Discussion Questions**

1. Why do you think Lisa Genova chose the title Every Note Played for this novel? Richard and Karina were both professional pianists. Describe how they relate to the music they played. Were there any notes or compositions that were particularly meaningful to them?

2. Upon learning of Richard’s diagnosis, Karina pays him a visit. Describe the visit. Did you learn anything that surprised you about their relationship? What are Karina’s motivations for visiting Richard? Do you think that her intentions are good? Why or why not?

3. While Richard and Karina were both classically trained pianists, Karina’s true passion is playing jazz piano. What does she like about jazz? Why does Richard prefer classical music? Do their musical preferences reflect their personalities?

4. Richard comes to think of Bill as “equal parts brother, doctor, parent, and friend.” (p. 96) What did you think of him? How does he help Richard preserve his sense of dignity and humanity? What’s effect does Bill have on Karina?

5. While Richard’s ALS is progressing, he reflects on how “in a million ways, living with ALS is a practice in the art of Zen.” (p. 98) For example, although Richard dislikes Broadway musicals, he does not tell Bill when Bill sings show tunes. Why not? Can you think of any other instances when Richard practices “the art of Zen”? What are they?

6. Describe Richard’s relationship with his brothers. Why is he reluctant to tell them of his diagnosis? What did you think of Tommy and Mikey? Were you surprised by Tommy’s apology? Explain your answer. How does Tommy’s apology and the ensuing conversation help Richard see another side of his brothers? Why might Richard’s “big, brave, tough jock brothers [be] scared of their father, too”? (p. 221)

7. Describe Dr. George. How is Dr. George able to relate to Richard and put him at ease? Dr. George suggests that Richard consider recording “legacy messages.” What are they? What does Richard think about them? Discuss legacy messages with your book club. If you were in Richard’s situation, for whom would you want to record these messages? What would your messages say?

8. At the clinic, the practitioners use the term care, “and Richard doesn’t openly object but care is not provided every three months when he comes for his appointment.” (p. 51) Why does Richard continue to go to the clinic? Does Richard’s opinion regarding the “care” that he gets at the clinic change? If so, why? Are there different ways to provide care? What kind of care does Kathy provide to Richard? Compare and contrast it with the care that Bill and Karina provide him.