

## READING GROUP GUIDE

**TENEMENTAL: ADVENTURES OF A RELUCTANT LANDLADY by Vikki Warner**

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1. Vikki Warner makes the daunting decision to buy a three-story house rather suddenly, without fully considering the potential consequences. Have you ever made a similarly big decision with little forethought? What were the results?
2. Vikki comes to see PennHenge as symbolic of her adulthood, a project that helped her become a “real grown-up” (38). In what ways did PennHenge help Vikki grow up? What does “growing up” seem to mean in the context of this book? What does it mean to you?
3. Over time, the narrator begins to develop a genuine affection for her new home and her neighborhood of Federal Hill, describing herself as a “stayer” (85). What does it mean to be a “stayer”? Why is being a “stayer” significant in the context of Federal Hill?
4. As a landlady, Vikki is often undermined by contractors, realtors, and tenants alike for her gender as well as her inexperience. How does being a woman affect Vikki’s experience as a homeowner and landlady?
5. “Our homes are wrapped up with our inconsistencies, our faults, our virtues, and our victories in one anarchic package,” suggests Vikki (264). Do you agree that our homes become reflections of ourselves? How does your own home act as a reflection of you—or not?
6. Standing knee deep in a basement full of murky water after a pipe burst, Vikki discovers her “single best landlady trait” (64). What is that trait? How does Vikki use it when faced with adversity?
7. Vikki frequently ruminates on what it means to live in a changing neighborhood. How does Vikki’s personal story reflect and intersect with broader social and economic changes in urban areas across the United States?
8. Though PennHenge remains a constant in Vikki’s life, other relationships come and go throughout the text. How does Vikki reveal the intricacies of her friendships, romantic partnerships, and family relationships via her memoir of PennHenge?

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