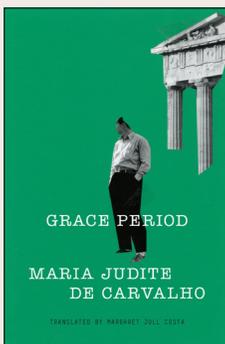


## GRACE PERIOD

Maria Judite de Carvalho, translated from Portuguese by Margaret Jull Costa

1. The novel's title, *Grace Period*, suggests an extension of time beyond an original deadline. How do grace periods function in the novel? To whom are they extended (or not), and how are they made use of?
2. What significance does Mateus's childhood home have to him, and to others in his life? How does he understand his decision to sell the house?
3. Returning to his family's house, Mateus remarks that it was "very different from how he remembered it as a child" (pg. 7). Can this statement apply more broadly to Mateus's relationship to the past?
4. *Grace Period* highlights three generations of women: Mateus's mother and Graça, Alberta, and Natália. What does each woman desire, and what options are available for acting on her desire?
5. What impact does focalizing the novel through Mateus's point of view have on the reading experience?
6. Mateus's mother longed to "sit [at the esplanade] for a while and rest," and Alberta does little but rest, yet despite their differences both women exist on society's margins (pg. 15). What is the novel's perspective on the double standard women are forced to navigate?
7. Throughout the novel Mateus comments on the oppressive heat of the seaside town. What is suggested by his atmospheric attention, and what role does it play in his thoughts and in the novel?
8. In a story full of silences, what literary strategies does *Grace Period* use to reveal secrets and expose what goes unsaid?
9. How does the value Mateus places on respectability impact his way of life and his relationships? How do other characters in the novel, especially women, relate to respectability?



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