

READERS' GUIDE

Nanaimo Girl by Prudence Emery

INTRODUCING *Nanaimo Girl*

Born in Nanaimo to a family of eccentrics, Prudence Emery was set up to do all the right things: she went to Crofton House private school for girls in Vancouver, attended the Trafalgar Day Ball, and was a debutante.

But she shattered family expectations when she took off for London to attend art school. There, living on an allowance from her father, she met and became fast friends with an astonishing array of people, and at the expense of her studies, she became a party girl.

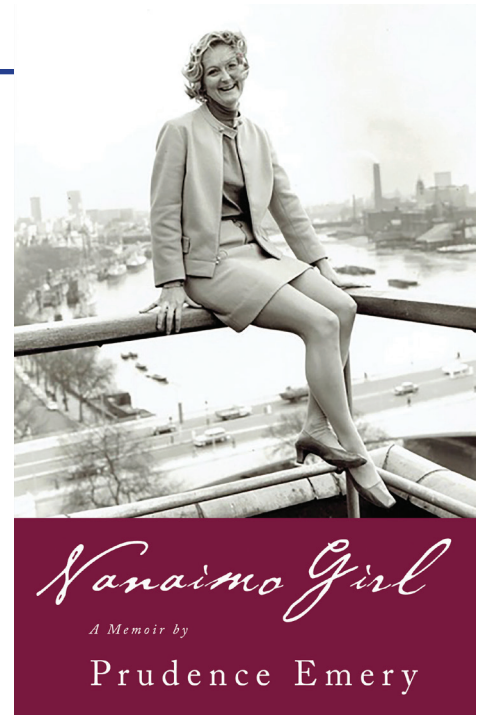
After her father cautioned her that he would not pay for such a decadent lifestyle, she moved to Montreal and landed a job at Expo 67.

After this, she returned to London to work in the press office of the Savoy Hotel — back in the days when the Savoy was the home-away-from-home for the stars of stage and film, political figures, and royalty.

Realising that she would die of champagne consumption, she returned to Canada where she worked as a film publicist. Upon retirement, she moved to Victoria where she continues to live a life that is anything but prudent.

IMPORTANT THEMES

Joie de vivre – The stories that Prudence Emery put into her memoir are wonderfully fun, charming, and show that if you sprinkle around a little *joie de vivre*, you can always find a way to have a good time.



QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Prudence's mantra is "Isn't it funny." (p. 3) Do you have a mantra? What is it?
2. This memoir came about when Prudence found some old letters she had written to her parents. Do you have anything from your past (letters, journals, etc.) that might inspire a memoir?
3. Prudence paints an enchanting portrait of many places and eras. If you could live in any place or era, where or when would you live?
4. Which of Prudence's careers would you like to have had?
5. Which of Prudence's anecdotes stands out to you the most? Do you have a favourite?
6. Describe Prudence's life in 3 words or less.
7. *NOW Magazine* wrote the following about *Nanaimo Girl*, which was published in the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic: "These are bleak times, for sure, so a memoir from someone who merrily defied expectations is welcome." Discuss the importance of reading literature during bleak times.



ABOUT PRUDENCE

Prudence Emery was born in Nanaimo, educated in Vancouver, then lived in London, UK, and Toronto, before moving to Victoria, BC.