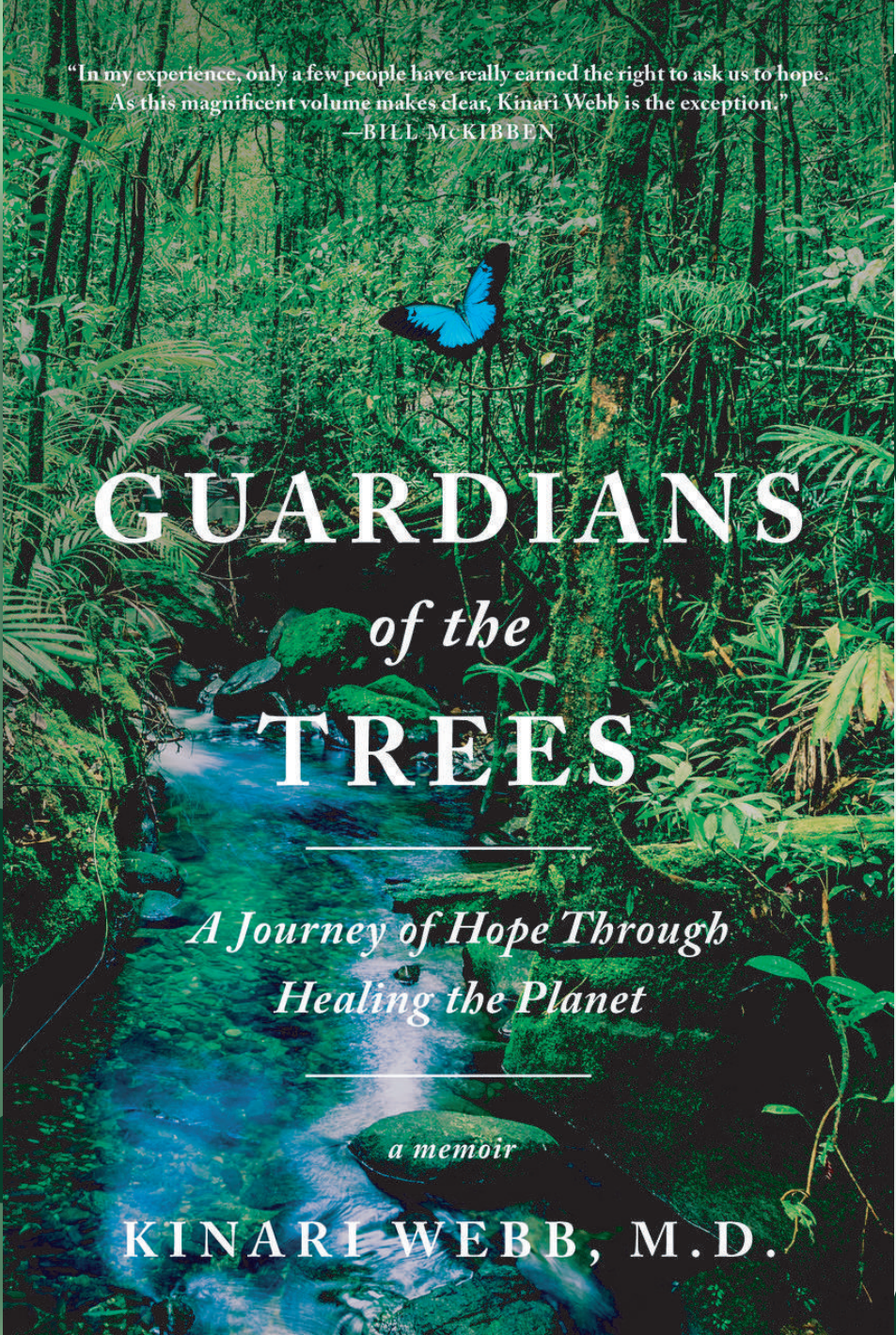


# Book Club Kit

"In my experience, only a few people have really earned the right to ask us to hope. As this magnificent volume makes clear, Kinari Webb is the exception."

—BILL MCKIBBEN



## GUARDIANS *of the* TREES

*A Journey of Hope Through  
Healing the Planet*

*a memoir*

KINARI WEBB, M.D.



FLATIRON  
BOOKS

Dear Reader,



I started writing this book just about the work, but found it made no sense. Only with my personal journey could I explain why I made the choices I did. But then, as I got deeper into sharing that story, I realized how profoundly the personal is the planetary and vice versa.

Without doing our own personal work, most of us have limited capacity. But it's equally true that the personal is insufficient, because of how deeply interconnected we all are.

When I use those words, "we all," I use them in the way many Indigenous peoples do, fully knowing that not just all humans but also all the trees and animals we share this planet with are our relatives. It is only when we all thrive collectively, that we can individually all thrive.

I also know deeply that every last one of us has something to give to the solution of a thriving planet. What is your role -- of what are you a guardian? As you meet together, I ask that you keep returning to that quiet inner voice -- the one that draws you towards greater thriving and alignment. What is specifically being asked of you?

These days I feel that there has been a birthing of a new way of being on our planet, but it is still a small infant and it will take all our nurturing for it to grow into a thriving new approach to living on our planet which recognizes interbeing. Will you help raise this child well?

Thank you for reading and sharing my book.

My very best wishes,

Handwritten signature in blue ink.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does this memoir's title, *Guardians of the Trees*, mean to you? Did the book change how you think about trees and rainforests?
2. The memoir begins with a moment from Kinari's childhood, when she and her horse, Pinto, narrowly escape falling off a mesa. What tone does this story set for the rest of the book to come?
3. Kinari nearly dies the evening she is stung by a box jellyfish. At her clinic, as she fights for her life, she tells us she is unafraid of death. Why does she feel that way? How do her experiences in Indonesia and her relationship with her Indonesian patients and colleagues change how she thinks about death and dying?
4. As a doctor and later as a patient, Kinari is able to see firsthand the differences between Western medicine and more traditional practices. Discuss the ways in which her experiences in the United States shape the way she provides health care in Indonesia. What are the problems she identifies with Western medicine?
5. Growing up in New Mexico, Kinari had a great deal of freedom but also faced numerous challenges, including sexual abuse and trauma. How does her childhood shape the person she becomes, in both positive and negative ways?
6. Discuss the Indonesian phrase "Tak kenal, tak sayang" (If you don't know something, you can't love it). How does that quote help explain Kinari's relationship with the rainforest and with her work more generally? What does it mean to you? Do you agree?
7. As a college student studying orangutans in Gunung Palung, Kinari describes the rainforest as "a giant curved mirror, reflecting back one's emotions, magnified and distorted: one moment joy and the next fear." What do you think she means? What does she have to confront in the forest, and how does that experience
8. What is the Blackfoot First Nation's hierarchy of needs? How does it help shape Kinari's thinking about community, health care, and the environment?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

9. How does chaos theory, known as the butterfly effect, inform Kinari's approach to her own work? How might the lives of individuals affect global climate change?
10. Although she is raised as an atheist, Kinari has a powerful spiritual awakening in the rainforest at Gunung Palung, which makes her completely rethink her relationship to faith. She describes suddenly feeling "awake as I had never been before." What do you think leads her to this profound moment? What roles do faith and spirituality play in the rest of her memoir?
11. Central to Kinari's work is the idea of interconnectedness, that "harm to one, including to the environment, is harm to all." How does this memoir help explain that view? Did you find your own understanding of our interdependence shifting as you read?
12. What is "radical listening"? How does it shape the work of ASRI and Health In Harmony? How does it contrast with the approach of traditional NGOs, at least as Kinari experiences it while helping with the emergency response after the hurricane?
13. What factors contribute to Hotlin's feelings of anger and frustration toward Kinari and her role at ASRI? What specific obstacles does she face as a woman of color? How do she and Kinari rethink the leadership structure of ASRI to help address these issues?
14. Kinari argues that we as humans often struggle to accept "how radically things can change; as soon as one problem is solved, we focus on the next." Do you agree? How might such thinking hold us back, and what alternative does Kinari model?
15. Near the end of the memoir, Kinari reflects that perhaps "both planting and fire were necessary. . . . Sometimes loss makes room for new ideas, new lessons, and new life—despite the painful sadness." How does this play out both in her work and her personal life, especially in her marriage to Cam? Do you agree with her?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

16. How does Kinari's prophetic dream lead her to rethink the scope of her work and turn her attention toward the global climate crisis?
  
17. Discuss the Declaration of Interbeing at the end of the book. How can individuals create meaningful change when it comes to global warming? What are some concrete ways you might alter your lifestyle after reading this memoir? Did you find it ultimately hopeful?

# About the Author



**Kinari Webb, MD**, is the founder of Health In Harmony, an international nonprofit dedicated to reversing global heating, understanding that rainforests are essential for the survival of humanity, and a co-founder of Alam Sehat Lestari (ASRI). Dr. Webb graduated from Yale University School of Medicine with honors and currently splits her time between Indonesia, international site assessments, and the San Francisco Bay Area. *Guardians of the Trees* is her debut.

# What they're saying...

“In *The Guardian of the Trees* Kinari Webb tells the story of how she fell in love with a rainforest in Indonesia and how she worked to save it by listening to and involving the local people and improving their lives by providing medical facilities. People, animals and the environment – all are interconnected. Her courage and perseverance through a series of setbacks and a life-threatening encounter with a deadly jellyfish fill one with admiration. A wonderful book.”

– **D**r. Jane Goodall, DBE,  
Founder of the Jane Goodall  
Institute & U.N. Messenger  
of Peace

“With Borneo as backdrop as well as foreground, Kinari Webb compellingly shows us how public health and planetary health are one and the same.”

– **C**hristiana Figueres,  
co-author of *The Future We  
Choose*, architect of the  
2015 Paris Agreement, and  
co-founder of Global Opti-  
mism

“Inspiring...In a compelling narrative, the author shares the details of her journey and the cultural nuances of the region...A unique perspective that offers immense hope and direction for humanity in the face of climate change.”


– **K**irkus Reviews

“This book is a wonder. An astonishing story, a page-turner, beautifully written, that will transport you deep into the rainforest and out again, transformed. Through her own remarkable journey, Kinari Webb has found a brilliant way to unite the healing of people and planet, to save both human lives and wild nature. So abundant is her passion and commitment that one can't help but emerge from her riveting story deeply affected, inspired, and flooded with hope.”

– **J**ennifer Ackerman,  
New York Times bestselling  
author of *The Genius of  
Birds* and *The Bird Way*

“In my experience, only a few people have really earned the right to ask us to hope. As this magnificent volume makes clear, Kinari Webb is the exception”

– **B**ill McKibben



# Declaration of Interbeing

*I hereby declare my intention to work toward a more healthy and sustainable relationship to the planet on a personal, community, and global level. I will become a force for healing and change in the face of the greed, injustice, and destruction which threaten the viability of the earth for sustaining human and non-human life. I recognize that we have little time left to switch from a path of destruction to one of thriving. I know we must all work together collaboratively to bring about change quickly.*

*I pledge my effort, resources, skills, knowledge, and desire. The tools of this work are non-violent reorganization, love, radical listening, wisdom, equality, justice, compassion, innovation, determination, persistence, and truth. I pledge to work together across nationalities, religions, cultures, social classes, genders, and identities, knowing that only in diversity will we find enough strength and wisdom.*

*I recognize that even the smallest actions – both internally and externally – can have profound impacts. This is not work of self-denial, but rather of enhancing and improving our lives individually and collectively: knowing there will be enough.*

*I sign here to indicate my commitment. My signature is a sign of the depth of my conviction, my desire for change, my willingness to work together, and my readiness to promote human well-being and the sustainable health of the natural world.*

Signed,

X \_\_\_\_\_





I AM

*guardian*

of

THE  
TREES



[www.guardiansofthetrees.org](http://www.guardiansofthetrees.org)