

HEARTS WE LEAVE BEHIND

“This novel is a literary gem that invites readers into a world of love, heartbreak, and healing.”

“The enchanting prose of 'Hearts We Leave Behind' adds a magical touch to an already captivating story.”

“A triumphant tale of personal growth and change that will inspire anyone who has ever wished for a second chance.”



FOREWARD

I would love it if you would consider *Hearts We Leave Behind* for your next book club discussion group. I promise you that the novel will foster soul-searching in each participant and lively conversations between the group. Some may even walk away with a different perspective on certain issues, be it sisterhood, fraught family relationships, or organ donation. Book Club meetings are all about the company and perhaps sharing a nice glass of wine, too.

For a congenial evening, you may consider asking readers to bring a picture from their childhood and high school, photos of their siblings, and close (or not so close) family members. Perhaps they know of someone who underwent an organ transplant and would like to share their story.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. How did the prologue affect your reading of the book?
2. Which is your favorite character in the book? Do you relate to that person, and why? Did your opinion of this character change at the end of the story?
3. This novel explores the complicated relationship between three sisters. In what ways are the sisters different, and in what ways are they alike?
4. How much of the sisters' personalities were shaped by their shared childhood and separate adult life?
5. Stella is pretty much unlovable since the beginning of the book. Do you think her arrogance and cattiness are real, or are they a defense mechanism? Does she feel trapped in having to excel since that is what people expect of her? Why is she so afraid of her own emotions? Do you know anyone like her?
6. Did your perception of Stella change as she became sick and the story unfolded? Did you, at any point in the book, start empathizing with her? Did you care for her or even like her in the end?
7. Willow is regarded as the wise and responsible one. Does she see herself any differently? What stereotypes or roles were assigned to you that aren't entirely authentic?

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8. Do you think Willow is justified in still being angry with Stella after all these years? Would you feel the same in that situation?
 9. Can a betrayal ever be forgivable, and under what circumstances? Do you feel Stella crossed a line?
 10. Daisy always places everyone's needs above her own. Is that kind of selflessness innate, or is she spurred to do so?
 11. Daisy rebounds from Stella's betrayal, but Willow's wounds never heal. Why do you think that is?
 12. Do you believe that a sister (or best friend) should always reach out, even when great pain has been caused? Or do you believe that sisters (or best friends) would never hurt each other?
 13. Discuss the pivotal role of "sisterhood" in our lives. Do you think it becomes even more important as we get older? Can BFF relationships be stronger than blood-related sisterhoods?
 14. After Daisy's car accident, how do the characters deal with the trauma and grief? What mechanisms do they use to cope and grow? Does one character's pain hit you harder, and why?
 15. The terrible loss of Daisy and Stella's medical crisis is the catalyst for change in the novel. Willow becomes her best self during the tragedy and ultimately saves Stella. But does the crisis help Willow? Do you believe tragedies can change people for the better?
 16. Stella's health crisis brings the sisters' opposing personalities into focus. How does this situation change each character? Does it bring them closer?
 17. The story is told from the points of view of four distinctive narrative voices—Daisy, Stella, Willow, and Jim. Did you identify with one voice more? Would you have preferred the story to have been told by one particular character? Which one?
 18. What do you think might have happened to the sisters' relationship had Daisy not died in the car accident?
 19. What has the novel taught us about the bonds of sisterhood and family, the strength of love, and the power of forgiveness?
 20. Do you feel that the ending is organic to the story, or are you surprised by it?