

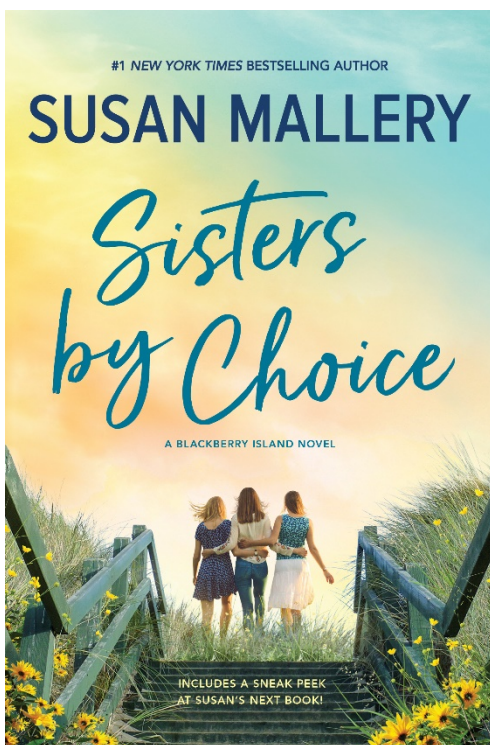
SISTERS BY CHOICE

Readers' Group Guide



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Please note: These questions contain spoilers, so it's recommended that you wait to read them until after you've finished the book.



1. SOPHIE FELT THAT SHE WAS THE ONLY PERSON SHE COULD TRULY RELY ON, ESPECIALLY WHEN IT CAME TO HER BUSINESS. WHAT HAPPENED IN HER PAST TO MAKE HER FEEL THAT WAY? HOW DID THAT HOLD HER BACK, PREVENT HER FROM TAKING CLANDESTINE KITTY TO THE NEXT LEVEL? WHAT LESSON DID SHE NEED TO LEARN? WHAT HAPPENED IN THE STORY TO TEACH HER THAT LESSON?

2. MALLERY HAS SAID THAT BECAUSE SHE DIDN'T EVER WRITE FROM AMBER'S POINT OF VIEW, SHE NEVER TRULY KNEW WHETHER AMBER BELIEVED EVERYTHING SHE WAS SAYING, OR WHETHER SHE WAS PUTTING ON AN ACT IN ORDER TO MANIPULATE HER FAMILY. WHAT DO YOU THINK, AND WHY?

3. WHEN WOMEN ARE YOUNG, MANY HAVE A TENDENCY TO OVER-ACCOMMODATE. A WOMAN SOMETIMES SUBLIMATES HER NEEDS TO OTHERS'—HUSBAND, KIDS, FRIENDS. THEN WHEN SHE GETS OLDER AND WISER AND REALIZES THAT SHE HAS AS MUCH RIGHT TO A FULFILLING LIFE AS THEY DO, SHE HAS TO RENEGOTIATE HER RELATIONSHIPS, WHICH CAN BE STRESSFUL TO ALL PARTIES. HOW DID MALLERY CAPTURE THAT IN THIS STORY? IN THE DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN KRISTINE AND JAXSEN, WHOSE SIDE WERE YOU ON AND WHY?

4. HOW DID YOU FEEL WHEN RUTH, KRISTINE'S MOTHER-IN-LAW, GAVE KRISTINE SOME START-UP MONEY? WHY DO YOU THINK SHE DID THAT? WHAT MESSAGE DID THAT SCENE CONVEY ABOUT RUTH'S RELATIONSHIP WITH HER OWN HUSBAND?

5. AT THE BEGINNING OF THE BOOK, HEATHER WAS WORKING HER TAIL OFF, BUT NOT MAKING PROGRESS. IT'S LIKE SHE WAS TRYING TO RIDE A BICYCLE UPHILL WITHOUT THE CHAIN ENGAGED. HOW WERE HEATHER'S ACTIONS AND DECISIONS LEADING HER TOWARD LIVING THE SAME SORT OF LIFE AS HER MOTHER—WITHOUT SUCCESS AND FILLED WITH REGRET? WHAT HAPPENED TO MAKE HER CHANGE DIRECTION? DO YOU THINK THERE'S ANY HOPE THAT AMBER CAN STILL CHANGE HER LIFE? WHY OR WHY NOT? DO YOU THINK SHE WANTS TO?

6. BOTH SOPHIE'S RELATIONSHIP WITH DUGAN AND KRISTINE'S RELATIONSHIP WITH JAXSEN HAD A LOT TO SAY ABOUT EQUALITY—NOT GENDER EQUALITY, NECESSARILY, BUT A RELATIONSHIP OF EQUALS REGARDLESS OF GENDER. DISCUSS. HOW IMPORTANT IS BALANCE IN ROMANCE?

7. WHEN MALLERY FIRST GOT THE IDEA FOR THIS BOOK, IT CENTERED AROUND THE THEME OF AMBITION. IN AMERICAN POPULAR CULTURE, AMBITION, ESPECIALLY IN WOMEN, IS SOMETIMES CONFLATED WITH GREED, GIVING IT A NEGATIVE CONNOTATION. MALLERY WANTED TO EXPLORE THE POSITIVE SIDE OF AMBITION. HOW DID SHE DO THAT IN EACH OF THE THREE STORYLINES? IS A WOMAN WRONG TO BE AMBITIOUS? IS THERE ANY SUCH THING AS "TOO AMBITIOUS" AND, IF SO, WHERE IS THAT LINE? CAN A WOMAN HAVE IT ALL? CAN A MAN? IF JAXSEN HADN'T COME AROUND, DO YOU THINK THAT KRISTINE WOULD HAVE SACRIFICED HER MARRIAGE IN ORDER TO FULFILL HER PROFESSIONAL AMBITIONS? WHY OR WHY NOT? WOULD SHE HAVE BEEN RIGHT TO DO SO? WHY OR WHY NOT? HOW DID AMBER REINFORCE THE THEME OF AMBITION? DUGAN?

8. THERE ARE TWO PIVOTAL SCENES IN THIS BOOK WHEN THE ONLY THING THAT REALLY CHANGED WAS A CHARACTER'S PERCEPTION—AND YET, THAT CHANGE OF PERCEPTION CHANGED EVERYTHING. DISCUSS PERCEPTION AS IT RELATES TO THESE TWO SCENES, AND HOW THINGS CHANGED AS A RESULT:

a. SOPHIE FINDS OUT ABOUT DUGAN'S PAST.

b. KRISTINE DISCOVERS THAT JAXSEN WASN'T JUST COOLING OFF AT HIS PARENTS' HOUSE; IN HIS HEART, HE HAD LEFT HER.

9. WERE YOU SURPRISED BY THE ENDING? HOW SO, AND WHAT DID YOU THINK WAS GOING TO HAPPEN?