



Little Black Dress

By Susan McBride
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Questions for Discussion

1. How are sisters Evie and Anna different? Are they alike in any way?
2. Do you see a parallel between the sisters' difficult relationship and Toni's relationship with Evie? Is it a case of history repeating itself (i.e., Evie's relationship with Anna) or something else?
3. Anna was instantly drawn into the Gypsy's shop while Evie wanted nothing to do with it. While Anna seemed mesmerized by the tale of the black dress and easily accepted that it was magical, Evie thought her foolish. What makes Anna so reckless and Evie so cautious?
4. Toni is as wary of the dress as Evie. Does she handle glimpsing her fate any better than Evie or

- Anna?
5. Once Evie had experienced the power of the dress, did it help her to understand why Anna left? Or did it further confuse her?
 6. Toni resisted going back to Blue Hills because she felt like her past was behind her; instead she discovered that so much of who she is relates to her own history and that of her family. Did she have to leave home to find herself? Or did Toni truly discover who she is once she returned to Blue Hills?
 7. When Anna walks into the river with the baby, Evie wishes her gone and can't imagine ever forgiving her. Do you think Anna's punishment was enough or too much? Why does it take so long for Evie to forgive? Do you think what Anna did was unforgivable?
 8. Is there any one thing that makes Toni realize she isn't in love with Greg, or is it a case of absence giving her clarity rather than making the heart grow fonder?
 9. What is the significance of Toni taking part in the ice harvest?
 10. The novel is full of water imagery as water is a life-giver but also has the power to take lives. How does this imagery symbolize what each main character goes through? (For example, Evie's sense of treading water while she's in a coma.)
 11. Should Anna and Evie have told Toni the truth about her birth? Was Anna right to want to keep it a secret for the time being? Is there ever a case when keeping secrets is less damaging than telling the truth?
 12. Do you have a personal belonging that holds some 'magic' for you? Does it make you feel better, happier, or more secure?