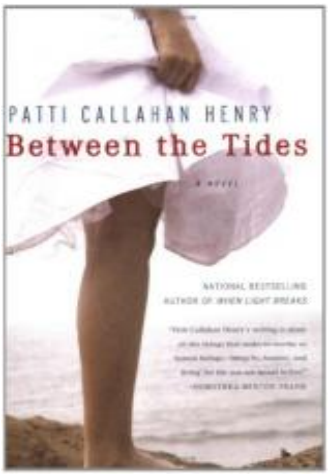
Between the Tides

by Patti Callahan Henry



About the Book

Between the Tides -- What if your father?s dying wish was for you to return to the one place you never wanted to see again?

Catherine Leary?s father told her that all of life is a story. Her story began with a childhood tragedy. Now her father?s last request is for her to confront her past, unravel a family secret, rediscover her heart and start a new chapter of her life.

?Known for her lyrical writing? (*Booklist*, starred review), bestselling author Patti Callahan Henry has become one of the South?s most unforgettable voices. Now, in her emotionally engaging new novel, she portrays a woman burdened by the past --- and the choices she must face to break free?

Nine months after Catherine Leary?s father, a literature professor, passed away, she still has not fulfilled his last wish: that she scatter his ashes in the Seaboro River in South Carolina. The scene of a childhood tragedy that forced her family to move, Seaboro is the last place Catherine wants to see again. But on the evening of her thirtieth birthday, her father?s young colleague --- whom she once dated --- pays a visit?

Forrest Anderson comes bearing gifts --- and a challenge from Catherine?s dead father: three probing questions that he had planned to put inside a birthday letter to his daughter. But it?s the news that Forrest plans to memorialize her father in an article about Seaboro?and the surprising revelation that her father visited there in recent years?that sends Catherine reeling. Hoping to stop Forrest from exposing her family?s secrets, she agrees to accompany him to her once-beloved Lowcountry town --- and embarks on a poignant journey back to the past.

Discussion Guide

1. Did you enjoy reading **Between the Tides**?

2. Patti Callahan Henry?s four novels have all been set, at least in part, in South Carolina?s Lowcountry. Is that a big part of this book?s appeal for you, or could it be set elsewhere and be just as effective?

3. How did Patti Callahan Henry use sand dollars in the novel to convey Catherine?s anguish and redemption? What images particularly stick in your mind?

4. As in many of Patti Callahan Henry?s previous books, *Between the Tides* describes an idyllic childhood that is abruptly changed by tragedy. Does Catherine Leary?s childhood in Seaboro remind you of your own childhood? Have you ever experienced an abrupt wrenching away from a place that you loved?

5. Discuss how the epigraph by William Shakespeare --- ?Whereof what?s past is prologue? --- applies to the novel, especially to Catherine. Is it true in your own life, and of those people closest to you?

6. Life is rarely neat and tidy, and like Catherine, many of us lose our parents before we?ve come to terms with the unanswered questions that linger from our childhoods, with the wounds we suffered and the love we failed to acknowledge. What do you find most striking about how Catherine comes to terms with Grayson?s death? Does it remind you about anything in your own life?

7. How would you answer the three questions that Grayson meant to pose to Catherine: What do you want to be doing when you die? If you die today, what will you regret not having done? What do you want your tombstone to say?

8. Do you agree that ?life is story??

9. As a child, Catherine loved to read, but she stopped reading not long after Sam?s death. Have you ever abandoned an activity you once enjoyed? If so, why? Why is Catherine able to return to reading, and what regret does she feel?

10. Grayson believed that novels could change people?s lives. Do you agree? Is there a particular novel that had a profound impact on your life?

11. For years, Alice kept secret what she learned in the hospital room on the night Sam died. Was she right in doing so? Why does she tell Catherine now?

12. Children often interpret adult behavior in self-centered ways, and like the child Catherine, can blame themselves for events over which they had little or no control, carrying a burden of guilt and shame. How might the adults in the story have acted differently to spare her this anguish, or was her suffering inevitable?

13. Catherine believes that ?Ellie and Mother were the antithesis of each other, and yet somehow together they made one complete mom for me.? Discuss Ellie?s and Margaret?s strengths and weaknesses, as women and as mothers.

14. Discuss the roles of Boyd and Forrest in the novel. Do you think Boyd will ever find a new way to view the past, as Catherine does? Why does Forrest drive away at the end? Why does he return?

Author Bio

Patti Callahan Henry is the *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestselling author of several novels, including SURVIVING SAVANNAH and BECOMING MRS. LEWIS. She is the recipient of the Christy Award, the Harper Lee Award for Alabama?s Distinguished Writer of the Year Award, and the Alabama Library Association Book of the Year. She is the cohost and cocreator of the popular weekly online live web show and podcast "Friends and Fiction." She lives in Alabama and South Carolina with her family.

Critical Praise

" Henry's warm, smoothly paced novel explores well-traveled themes of reconciliation and rebirth with fresh energy. "

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