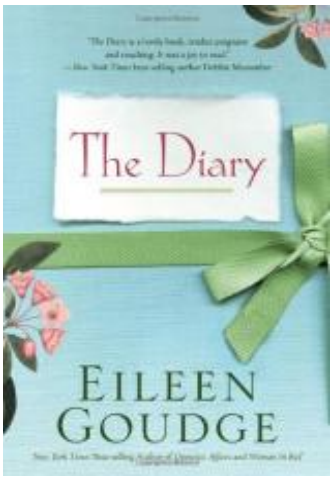
The Diary

by Eileen Goudge



About the Book

When the two grown daughters of Elizabeth Marshall discover an old diary of their mother?s in her attic, it comes as a shock to learn that the true love of Elizabeth?s life was not their father. But is all as it seems? That?s the mystery the two daughters must unravel as they stay up late reading the words penned by Elizabeth so long ago. Their mother can?t give them answers: After a massive stroke, she lies mute and near death in a nursing home. Only the pages of her diary can provide clues to what really happened.

Did Elizabeth marry their father, Bob, out of a sense of obligation rather than love? What happened to the mysterious ?A.J.? who ignited Elizabeth?s passions as a young woman?

The answer just might surprise you --- and have you asking, ?How well do I really know my parents??

Discussion Guide

1. What would you say the theme of **The Diary** is?

2. How does this theme relate to you, as a woman, a daughter and a mother?

3. In **The Diary**, after they discover their mother?s diary, Sarah and Emily begin to regard their mother as more than ?the woman who baked the bread.? Have you reached this point in your life? If so, what prompted the transformation in your thinking? How does being able to regard your mother as a woman change the way you interact with her?

3. Did **The Diary** inspire you to reach out to your mother as a woman?

4. Do you keep a diary or a journal? If so, why and what function does writing on the pages serve in your life? How

would you feel if one day your children read your diary? Would you consider it an invasion of your privacy?

5. Elizabeth learned, at least in her world of 1951, that her mother was right when she warned her: ?Reputation is everything.? How do you think this story would have evolved in today?s world?

6. Why do you think the author chose 1951 as the time period for Elizabeth?s story in this novel?

7. Elizabeth?s diary reveals that she was in love with another man before she married Sarah and Emily?s dad. Do you agree with Sarah?s comment that every wife fantasizes at some point about what it would be like to be married to someone else?

8. Sarah and Emily wonder what example it sets when a mother marries for security rather than love. Are her children more likely to make the same choice? What example do you want to set for your children about whom they should marry?

Author Bio

Eileen Goudge (b. 1950) is one of the nation?s most successful authors of women?s fiction, beginning with the acclaimed six-million-copy bestseller**Garden of Lies**.

Goudge is one of six children, and the joys and strife that come with a large family have informed her fiction, much of which centers on issues of sisterhood and family. At eighteen she quit college to get married, a whirlwind experience that two years later left her divorced, broke, and responsible for her first child. It was then that she started writing in earnest.

On a typewriter borrowed from a neighbor, Goudge began turning out short stories and articles. For years she had limited success --- selling work to*McCall?s*, *Reader?s Digest*, and the *San Francisco Chronicle* --- but in the early eighties she took a job writing for a new young adult series that would become the phenomenally successful *Sweet Valley High*.

Goudge moved her family from California to New York City, where she spent several years writing young-adult fiction, creating series such as *Seniors*,*Swept Away*, and *Who Killed Peggy Sue?* In 1986 she published her first novel of adult fiction, **Garden of Lies**, inspired by a childhood anxiety that, because she did not resemble her brothers and sisters, she had been secretly adopted --- a suspicion so strong that, at twelve, Goudge broke into her father?s lockbox expecting to find adoption papers. (She did not.) The tale of children swapped at birth was a national sensation, spent sixteen weeks on the *New York Times* bestseller list, and eventually yielded a sequel, **Thorns of Truth** (1998), which Goudge wrote in response to a decade of fan mail demanding she resolve the story.

Since then, Goudge has continued writing women?s fiction, producing a total of thirteen novels to date. Her most popular works include the three-book saga of Carson Springs --- **Stranger in Paradise** (2001), **Taste of Honey**(2002), and **Wish Come True** (2003) --- a small, secret-ridden town that Goudge based on scenic Ojai, California. She has also published a cookbook,**Something Warm from the Oven**, which contains recipes that Goudge developed as a reprieve

from the stresses of writing novels.

Goudge met her current husband while conducting an interview over the telephone. Entertainment reporter Sandy Kenyon was so taken with the author that he asked if he could call her back when the interview was done, and after weeks of late-night conversations they met in person and were married in 1996.

Goudge lives with Kenyon in New York City.

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