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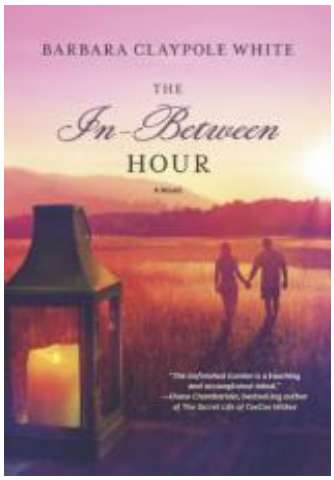
The In-Between Hour

by Barbara Claypole White



About the Book

What could be worse than losing your child? Having to pretend he's still alive?

Bestselling author Will Shepard is caught in the twilight of grief, after his young son dies in a car accident. But when his father's aging mind erases the memory, Will rewrites the truth. The story he spins brings unexpected relief?until he's forced to return to rural North Carolina, trapping himself in a lie.

Holistic veterinarian Hannah Linden is a healer who opens her heart to strays but can only watch, powerless, as her grown son struggles with inner demons. When she rents her guest cottage to Will and his dad, she finds solace in trying to mend their broken world, even while her own shatters. As their lives connect and collide, Will and Hannah become each other's only hope --- if they can find their way into a new story, one that begins with love.

Discussion Guide

1. A label of mental illness still carries a stigma in our society. Will has spent his life running from this shadow, and it has made him intensely private. Does your family have any experience of mental illness, and if so, have you struggled to find the balance between the public and the private? Do you think we have made any progress against the stigma?

2. How do you feel about Will?s relationship with his mother? Do you think he should have accepted and made allowances for her behavior in the way that his father did, or do you think Will was right to call Jacob an enabler?

3. Will pretends Freddie is traveling in a moment of exhaus-tion and grief, but he makes a conscious decision to keep the story --- and Freddie --- alive. What do you think of Will?s actions?

4. Do you believe grief manifests differently in everyone and that we all find unique ways of coping? Is Will merely trying to survive the unimaginable by leaning on the one thing he can control --- storytelling?

5. Hannah believes that there is living, breathing history on Saponi Mountain. Will echoes that thought when he sees pictures of Hitler?s anti-aircraft flak tower. Do you believe that places or buildings can retain an imprint of the past almost like a stored memory?

6. What do you think of Hannah?s comment that family life is never about the picket fence and the dinner rolls but about surviving crises? What do you think of Will?s comment that no one knows what happens once a family shuts the door and pulls the curtains?

7. What do you make of Hannah and Will?s connection through Rosie? Do you believe in fate, or do you see their relationship as growing out of a chain of events orchestrated by Poppy and Jacob? What do you make of Will?s comment that they fell in love because of, not despite, their respective family dramas?

8. The North Carolina forest is an important element of the story. How does the setting impact each character? Can you imagine the story working in a different setting?

9. The line between truth and lies blurs constantly in the novel. Do you agree that lying --- or spinning a story --- is sometimes necessary to protect loved ones? Why do you think Will and Cass worked so hard to keep Freddie?s paternity secret? Do you think it was realistic to assume they could do so? Do you think Hannah was right to hide her father?s suicide from her sons? What would you have done?

10. What do you think the future holds for Galen? Do you see him finding ways to cope with his depression?

11. In your opinion, what is the significance of the title, and how does it relate to each character?s story?

Author Bio

Barbara Claypole White grew up in the English village of Turvey with big dreams of becoming a novelist.

After a detour through women?s and medieval history at York University, she landed a job promoting London fashion. She was part of the first British Designer Show, measured celebrities in their underwear, and worked for the queen of the international rag trade, Dame Vivienne Westwood.

One day her boss sent her to New York, and she fell in love with an American professor who followed her around JFK Airport. Eighteen months later she was a faculty spouse, freelance writer, and marketing director in Champaign, Illinois, a small Midwest college town. She also started writing her first novel --- a love story set against the world of '80s fashion and AIDS.

Five years passed; then Barbara learned she was pregnant, and her husband was offered a distinguished professorship at UNC Chapel Hill. The family moved to the North Carolina forest, and Barbara became a stay-at-home mom and a woodland gardener --- factors that would shape her writing voice. She returned to her manuscript, took evening classes

in writing at the local arts center, and slammed into another detour: her young son developed obsessive-compulsive disorder.

From that moment, fascination with mental illness framed her life. She ditched her first novel and began writing DOGWOOD DAYS, which turned into THE UNFINISHED GARDEN. She also joined a nonfiction project for parents of children with invisible disabilities and blogs through the highs and lows of OCD at www.easytolovebut.com. (Her son is now an award-winning poet and musician attending college in the Midwest.)

Barbara is consistently drawn to the theme that people who need each other find each other, and is hard at work on her next novel...when she?s not gardening.

Photo Credit: Krista Moll Murray

Critical Praise

"Barbara Claypole White has created a tender and emotionally-charged novel in THE IN-BETWEEN HOUR. Her multifaceted, flawed characters, each with their own wounded heart, are carefully drawn. Ms. White depicts the North Carolina mountain setting with an evocative sense of place, creating a perfect backdrop for this story of life, survival and, ultimately, of love that transcends all."

? Karen White, *New York Times* bestselling author

?Readers, prepare to open your hearts for a charming cast of original characters.″

? Lydia Netzer, author of SHINE SHINE SHINE

?A heartwarming story of grief and the desire to save the people you love even when you can't save yourself.?

? Anita Hughes, author of LAKE COMO

?A captivating read about the deepest emotions the word *family* evokes.?

? Laura Spinella, author of PERFECT TIMING

"THE IN-BETWEEN HOUR breaks your heart and mends it at the same time.?

? Amy Sue Nathan, author of THE GLASS WIVES

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