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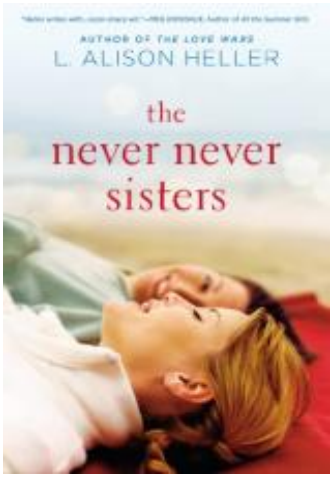
The Never Never Sisters

by L. Alison Heller



About the Book

THE NEVER NEVER SISTERS is an absorbing tale of family secrets --- the secrets we keep to protect our loved ones, the ones we rely on to guard ourselves and those from which we learn. L. Alison Heller skillfully blends the highly entertaining saga of the Reinhardt family one summer in New York City with a more in depth observation into a troubled marriage and complicated family relationships. Her page-turning novel will keep readers guessing each family secret right up until the satisfying end.

Marriage counselor Paige Reinhardt is counting down the days to summer, eager to reconnect with her workaholic husband at their cozy rental cottage in the Hamptons. But soon a mysterious crisis at Dave?s work ruins their getaway plans. Paige is still figuring out how to handle the unexplained chill in her marriage when her troubled sister suddenly returns after a two-decade silence. Now, instead of enjoying the lazy summer days along the ocean, Paige is navigating the rocky waters of a forgotten bond with her sister in the sweltering city heat.

As she attempts to dig deeper into Dave?s work troubles and some long-held family secrets, Paige is shocked to discover how little she knows about the people closest to her. Is it worth risking your most precious relationships in order to find yourself?

Discussion Guide

1. Before Paige sees Sloane she thinks of her as ?apart,? not a member of her family. By the end of the book, how do you think Paige would redefine her family unit?

2. How are Paige and Sloane similar and/or different? Who did you relate to more at the beginning of the book? At the end?

3. At what point do you think Paige starts to trust Sloane? What are some of Paige?s obstacles to forgiving her sister for the long absence and ultimately how does she get over them?

4. At what point did your opinion of Dave change (if it did at all)? Was it because of something he did or Paige?s growing awareness?

5. How do you think the dynamics of Paige and Vanessa?s relationship affected Paige in the years before the month during which the book takes place?

6. What do you think of Vanessa?s strengths and weaknesses as a parent? How much do you think her parenting style affected her daughter?s personalities?

7. At the end of the book, what, if anything, did you think was left unsaid between any of the characters? What do you like to think will happen to them each in the years ahead? Do you think the Reinhardt family is stronger as a whole at book?s end?

8. In several different instances throughout the book, how two characters relate to each other is tied into the actions of a third character. What are some examples of this?

9. Of all the characters in the book, whom do you relate to the most and why?

10. In your opinion, who is the most honest character in the book? The least honest? Why?

11. Did you agree with Paige?s conflicting feelings about Dave?s betrayals (real and perceived) as she was experiencing them? What about Paige?s betrayals of Dave?

12. Did you consider Paige?s flirting with Percy harmless or meaningful? Did your feelings about it change at the end of the book?

13. Did you feel that Paige?s professional training helped or hindered her ability to express her own emotions? Can you name examples of places where her desire to understand other people gets in the way of self-comprehension?

14. Percy and Paige discuss the difference between facts and perception. What are some other places in the book where the same facts mean different things to different people? What are the effects?

15. What is the role of ?silence? in the book? Were there situations in which shared knowledge might have altered how things unfold in the story? If you were Vanessa or Paige, what might you have done differently?

16. In your life, have you ever been in a situation where you?ve learned something surprising about someone close to you? What have you relied on in figuring out next steps?

17. At one point, Paige notes that Dave?s greatest strength (ambition) is also his greatest weakness. Are there examples of other places in the book where a character?s strength is also --- in extremis --- his or her greatest weakness? Have you seen any examples of this in your own life?

Author Bio

L. Alison Heller grew up in Connecticut and attended Bates College in Maine. After graduation, she wandered dreamily around the eastern seaboard, temping and interning and shelving books before landing in Chapel Hill, North Carolina where she enrolled at the University of North Carolina School of Law. In 2000, she graduated from UNC with honors and moved to New York City and toiled in several law firms, growing increasingly nostalgic for those days of dreamy wandering. Alison opened her own family law and mediation practice in 2006 to help couples divorce with their sanity intact. Alison currently lives in Brooklyn NY with her family.

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