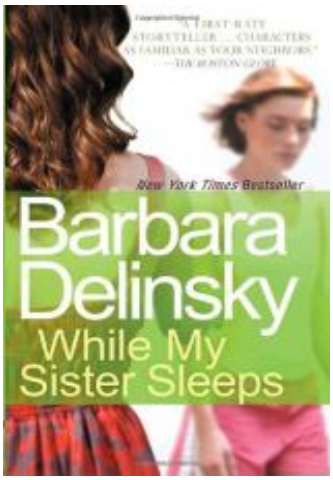
While My Sister Sleeps

by Barbara Delinsky



About the Book

A master storyteller, bestselling author Barbara Delinsky has captivated millions of readers worldwide with her emotionally powerful novels. **While My Sister Sleeps** takes the intensity to new heights. This is the story of a family forced to confront difficult truths, while finding the courage to love each other enough to let go.

Molly and Robin Snow, sisters who are incredibly close yet incredibly different, are in the prime of life. Robin has always been the hard-working star, an elite marathoner in peak condition, even training for the upcoming Olympic trials. She relies on Molly in countless ways, though Molly must also maintain long hours at the family business, a plant and tree nursery.

When Robin suffers a massive heart attack, the roles are reversed, and Molly finds herself having to be the one in the spotlight, speaking up on behalf of her sister. Though the doctors don?t expect Robin to recover, her mother is not willing to accept such a grim prognosis. As she tries to deny Robin?s fate, the discovery of a hidden journal forces her to confront reality --- and the lifetime of secrets that kept the Snows from truly connecting as a family.

Raising provocative questions about family ties, repercussions of the past, and the toughest choices a parent could ever have to make, **While My Sister Sleeps** is a novel that will give you much to discuss.

Discussion Guide

1. How would you characterize the relationship among Robin, Molly, and Chris? Does Chris play a different role because he is a son? How does the Snow family compare to yours?

2. How is Molly transformed during the week after Robin?s heart attack? What does Molly discover about herself and about the range of emotions she and her sister evoked in each other?

3. What is at the root of Kathryn?s controlling behavior? How did her past, including her experience with her own parents and her art teacher, influence her personality? Who has more power in the marriage: Kathryn or Charlie?

4. Discuss Snow Hill and what it means to Molly?s family. What makes the Snows good at nurturing plants but not as good at nurturing one another? What kinds of healing does Molly experience through her work at Snow Hill?

5. What do Charlie?s religious beliefs say about him and about the differences between him and the other members of his family?

6. As parents, what family memories do Chris and Erin create for their daughter, Chloe? How does their approach to parenting compare to Charlie and Kathryn?s?

7. How does Alexis?s illness shape the novel?s storyline? What parallels exist between her situation and Kathryn?s state of denial?

8. How much is Nick entitled to know, as a reporter and as a friend of Robin?s? Is Robin entitled to less privacy because she is a public figure, with a wide circle of fans who are concerned about her?

9. What determines whether Liz will be a threat to Chris?s marriage? How is Liz?s role in the novel different from Peter?s? How much does the past matter in a marriage, especially events that took place before the wedding?

10. What was it like to read Robin?s journal after hearing so much about her? Captured in her own words, how does her life compare to other people?s impressions of her?

11. What does Kathryn have to do in order to let go? What does it take to help her see the truth about her circumstances --- and Robin?s?

12. How is Marjorie?s family affected by her dementia? What do the connections among Marjorie, Kathryn, and Molly show us about mothers and daughters? What traits, emotional and otherwise, are passed from one generation to the next in **While My Sister Sleeps**?

13. Why is David willing to look out for Alexis? What makes him such a caring teacher? What makes him such a tough opponent against Nick?

14. Ultimately, what legacy does Robin leave for her family? What intangible gifts does Molly inherit from her sister?

15. Discuss the medical issues raised by Robin?s story. Is it unethical to keep a child from knowing the identity of his or her biological parents? How would you have handled the end-of-life-care questions raised by Robin?s heart attack?

16. How do secrets affect the characters in **While My Sister Sleeps** and in Barbara Delinsky?s other novels? When is it best to let a secret remain hidden? When is it best to reveal the truth?

Author Bio

Barbara Delinsky is the author of more than 20 *New York Times* bestselling books, including BEFORE AND AGAIN, THE SCENT OF JASMINE and LOVE SONGS. She has been published in 28 languages worldwide. A lifelong New Englander, Delinsky earned a B.A. in psychology at Tufts University and an M.A. in sociology at Boston College. She lives in Massachusetts with her husband, more books than she'll ever be able to read, two tennis racquets, and enough electronic devices to keep in close touch with her children and their families.

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Publication Date: October 27, 2009
Genres: Fiction
Paperback: 384 pages
Publisher: Anchor
ISBN-10: 0767928954
ISBN-13: 9780767928953