

Evidence of Life

by Barbara Taylor Sissel



About the Book

A mother's love. A wife's obsession. And the invisible fractures that can shatter a family?.

As her husband, Nick, and daughter, Lindsey, embark on a weekend camping trip to the Texas Hill Country, Abby looks forward to having some time to herself. She kisses them goodbye, and thinks to herself that she has it all --- a perfect marriage, a perfect life? Until a devastating storm rips through the region, and her family vanishes without a trace.

Though Nick and Lindsey are presumed dead, Abby refuses to give up hope. Consumed by grief and convinced her family is still alive, she sets out to find them. But as disturbing clues surface, Abby realizes that the truth may be more sinister than she imagined. Soon she finds herself caught in a current of lies that challenges everything she once believed about her marriage and family.

Discussion Guide

1. Abby goes to great lengths to find her family, including going to the Hill Country with Hank, a stranger. Do you think she was brave or foolish? What would you do in similar circumstances?
2. Is Nick's vulnerability at the time he met Sondra a mitigating factor in his betrayal of Abby? Can there ever be mitigating factors in the betrayal of one person by another?
3. Many times throughout the story, Abby is surprised by the behavior of people she believed she knew --- her husband, her son, her best friend; she learns she doesn't know any one of them as well as she thought. Have you ever been surprised in the same way? Do you think it's possible to know someone completely, even those with whom you live?
4. Abby and Kate are two very different people. Kate is outgoing and verbal, while Abby tends to be more solitary and

introspective. Would you say their friendship proves the old adage that opposites attract? What traits do you admire in your closest friend? In what ways does the relationship enhance who you are? Do you feel, as Abby does, that you and your closest friend are two halves of the same heart?

5. Many of the characters keep information from Abby in order to protect her. Should they have told Abby about the incidents immediately? Or is ignorance truly blissful? What would you have done?

6. What do you think is the significance of the scene where Dennis and Abby come across the injured doe and her fawn? What about the old Indian chief's sacrifice in the legend of the bluebonnet?

7. Discuss the significance of the title.

8. Motherhood and sacrifice are strong themes in the book. Discuss the sacrifices Abby made for her children. Do you feel she did enough to protect them and to steer them in the right direction in life?

Author Bio

Barbara Taylor Sissel is the author of *EVIDENCE OF LIFE*, *THE NINTH STEP* and *THE VOLUNTEER*. She once lived on the grounds of a prison facility in Kentucky, which inspired her interest in the families behind the crimes about which she writes. An avid gardener and the mother of two sons, Barbara currently resides in the beautiful Texas Hill Country.

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