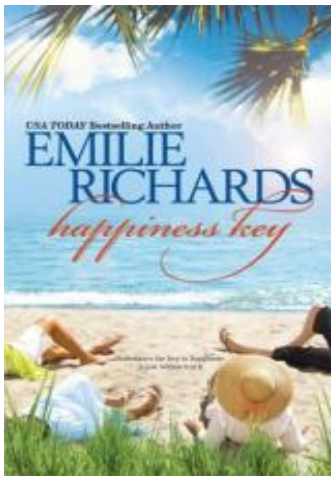
Happiness Key

by Emilie Richards



About the Book

Tracy Deloche's pampered existence imploded when her husband was sent to prison. Now all she has left are twenty-five acres of Florida Gulf Coast sand, five tumbledown beach houses and no idea how to start over.

Janya Kapur comes from a wealthy, close-knit Indian family. Now she's an exile in a strange country and deeply unhappy in an arranged marriage to a man she barely knows.

Plainspoken Wanda Gray despises the old beach house she?s forced to share with husband Ken, a troubled cop. Tired of watching her marriage fail, she takes a job guaranteed to destroy it --- if he cares enough to discover what she?s doing.

Widowed Alice Brooks always dreamed of living on the beach, but since her daughter's death, she's grown forgetful and confused. Her son-in-law and granddaughter have come to stay, but Alice isn?t sure she should be grateful.

When elderly Herbert Krause, the only other resident of Happiness Key, dies alone in his cottage clutching a mysterious key, the four women are reluctantly diverted from their personal sorrows and warily come together to find his family. As Herb?s real story is revealed, the women discover difficult truths about their own lives and the men they love. Most important they also discover the treasure of a friendship that almost didn't happen.

Discussion Guide

1. Tracy Deloche?s life has undergone drastic changes. Was she at least partially responsible for some of them? Were you able to sympathize with her or did you feel she deserved what happened? Was her former wealth and status a hindrance to liking her?

2. Wanda Gray is set in her ways and not always politically correct. Were you able to see beyond Wanda?s attitudes to

the woman she really was? When she made changes in her thinking, could you believe them?

3. Through no fault of her own Janya Kapur has been ostracized from her family and the life she loved in India. Was her solution, an arranged marriage to a stranger, one you could understand? Or was this so outside your own experiences that it was difficult to relate to?

4. Alice Brooks is dealing with the aftermath of a stroke as well as the addition of her son-in-law and granddaughter to her household. Was her confusion and anxiety about the changes in her life understandable? Or did you suspect there was more going on than the neighbors and perhaps Alice knew?

5. Wanda has taken on a controversial evening job because her policeman husband, Ken, has more or less abandoned her. Could you sympathize with her pain and anger as her marriage fell into a downward spiral? Could you sympathize with her preferred method of paying Ken back? Could you sympathize with Ken, who was still trying to deal with the aftermath of a fatal shooting? Have you ever reacted in anger in ways you later came to regret?

6. Janya is still pining for Darshan, the man she loved and was engaged to in India, until a scandal destroyed their relationship. Could you understand her ambivalence, even her temptation to be with him after Darshan contacted her again, even though she was now a married woman? Were you satisfied with the outcome of their encounter?

7. When things begin to happen at home that worry her, Olivia, Alice?s granddaughter, is caught between her grandmother and her father. Did she react the way you would expect a child of ten to react? In the end, do you think that Olivia will be able to overcome everything that happened? How affected are children by the actions of people they love?

8. Tracy discovers that a bright smile doesn?t excuse poor manners and impatience. What else does Tracy learn that helps her to become a more sympathetic human being? Did you like her from the beginning anyway? If not, when did you begin to believe she might have hidden depths? Or did you ever?

9. Marsh and Bay Egan become a part of Tracy?s life, even though they are the last people she ever expected to welcome into it. Are the Egan males exactly what Tracy needs, or are they so different that you had problems believing she would bond with either of them?

10. The women find that the key to their own happiness, like the key to Herb Krause?s, is just within reach. Friendship is definitely part of the equation for each of them. In your life, what is key to your own happiness? And have you sometimes, like Herb, been afraid to use it to open the door to a better life?

Author Bio

Emilie Richards? many novels feature complex characterizations and in-depth explorations of social issues, a result of her training and experience as a family counselor, which contribute to her fascination with relationships of all kinds. Emilie, a mother of four, lives with her husband in Florida, where she is currently working on her next novel.

Photo Credit: Galen McGee

Critical Praise

?This quintessential beach read is full of intrigue, romance, comedy and a splash of mystery??

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