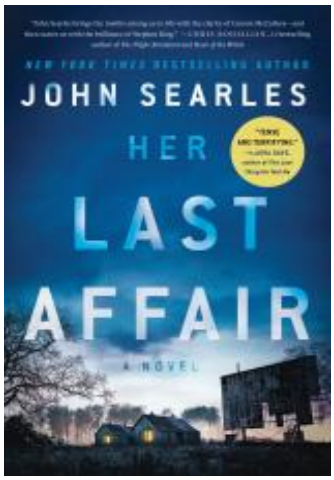
Her Last Affair

by John Searles



About the Book

Every marriage has its secrets?

Skyla lives alone in the shadow of the defunct drive-in movie theater that she and her husband ran for nearly 50 years. Ever since Hollis? death in a freak accident the year before, Skyla spends her nights ruminating about the regrets and deceptions in her long marriage. That is, until she rents a cottage on the property to a charming British man, Teddy Cornwell.

A thousand miles away, Linelle is about to turn 50. Bored by her spouse and fired from her job when a questionable photo from her youth surfaces on social media, her only source of joy is an online affair with her very first love, a man she?s not seen in nearly 30 years, Teddy Cornwell.

While in New York City, Jeremy, a failed and bitter writer, accepts an assignment to review a new restaurant in Providence. Years ago, Providence was the site of his first great love and first great heartbreak --- and maybe, just maybe, he?ll look her up when he?s back in town.

Part page-turning thriller, part homage to film noir, and dazzling in its insight into the often desperate desires of the human heart, HER LAST AFFAIR is a tense and atmospheric novel of love lost and found again.

Discussion Guide

1. HER LAST AFFAIR is told through the perspectives of three different characters. How does the author use these alternating points of view to both hide and reveal key elements of the mystery?

2. In one of Teddy?s messages to Linelle, he tells her that ?I spend a great deal of time wondering what it would be like

if we could erase the years and restraints of adult hood so we could have ourselves a proper date.? How are all of the characters trying to ?erase the years,? turn back time and revert to an earlier version of themselves?

3. Linelle remembers her time with Teddy as ?simple,? especially compared to her adult life. But from what we know about their relationship, was it really so simple, or is this just hindsight bias? When looking back on our pasts, how does nostalgia lead us to focus on the positives and skew our perspective of what really happened?

4. Teddy muses: ?Funny, isn?t it? How certain people can make you feel downright exquisite and others can make you feel...ugly.? To what extent are Linelle, Skyla and Jeremy affected by the power of other people to make them feel ugly or beautiful, and what does this say about their tendency to see themselves through the eyes of other people? How do certain characters use this power to their advantage?

5. Linelle loses her job and, indirectly, her daughter, after an old photo of her is leaked online. Do you think it was fair for Linelle to be judged by the mistakes of her past? How would you compare her experience with other real-life examples of ?cancel culture??

6. Did you feel Skyla, Linelle and Jeremy were reliable narrators or not? Were there any narrators you found yourself trusting more than the others?

7. Skyla believes there?s no such thing as closure. Do you agree with her? Do any of the characters get closure by the end of the book?

8. For much of the book, the connections between Skyla, Linelle, Jeremy and Teddy aren?t entirely clear. As their stories began to converge, were you surprised by how they were revealed to be connected? Did you guess any of the twists, and if so, what clues led you there?

9. Have you ever looked up an old friend or partner online? If so, what prompted you to do it? Were you surprised by anything you found?

10. By the end of the book, Skyla comes to the realization that ?The past doesn?t have to hold you back. You can make a new life for yourself.? What do you think is next for her, and for Linelle? Do you think they?ll be able to move on from their pasts, or will the past continue to influence their lives?

Author Bio

John Searles is a *New York Times* bestselling and award-winning author of four novels. His books have been published in over a dozen languages and have been voted ?Best of the Year? or top picks by *Boston Globe*, *Entertainment Weekly*, *Salon* and the American Library Association. A frequent contributor to *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, John was a top editor at *Cosmopolitan* for two decades, first hired by Helen Gurley Brown.

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