Mending Fences

by Sherryl Woods



About the Book

For 10 years Emily Dobbs and Marcie Carter have been the closest of friends. They've raised their kids together, shared joy and heartache, exchanged neighborhood gossip over tea. But when Marcie's son, now a college freshman sports star, is arrested for date rape, the bond between the families could be shattered forever.

As the Carters try to deal with the unthinkable, Emily discovers her daughter has been hiding a terrible secret?a secret that threatens the futures of both families. Recently divorced, Emily struggles to keep it all together --- to support her terrified daughter, to maintain her friendship with Evan's mother and to have faith in the detective who could change all of their lives.

When things seem darkest, both she and Marcie discover that sometimes the first step toward a better future is mending fences with the past.

Discussion Guide

1. In MENDING FENCES, two close families are challenged to overcome a criminal betrayal of trust on the part of one of their own. As in all of Sherryl Woods? books, though, the story is about so much more than the main conflict. It?s about relationships of all kinds that are important to women --- family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, love interests. What are these other relationships, and how does Evan?s behavior affect them? Does anything good come out of the bad things that he did?

2. If you were Emily Dobbs, and the son of your best friend were accused of rape, what would you do? What could Emily have done differently to help her family members once she heard the news?

3. How did Evan Carter become a young man who could force himself on trusting girls? What forces impacted his moral

code, influenced him to disrespect women, to disregard their wishes?

4. Marcie?s identity has been tied up in gaining her husband?s approval. Do you think she enabled her husband to treat her as he did? What can we learn about how parents' actions impact the way their children treat members of the opposite sex?

5. Emily?s husband, Derek, lets his job become the priority in his life. How does this affect his wife and children? What lessons are Emily and Derek?s children learning from the ?roommate? relationship of their parents? With today?s pressures to do more --- to work harder, smarter, longer --- how can a man, or a woman, keep the family as the number one priority?

6. In some respects, Derek?s son, Josh, functions more as the head of the family than his father does. What does this take away from Josh? How do you think this will affect his future, especially his role as a father if he gets married and has children?

7. Neither Derek nor Ken would win husband of the year awards. Which of these characters do you respect more, and why? Why do you think Derek and Ken didn?t get along well?

8. Despite the serious issues in MENDING FENCES, there are delightful, light moments. Which of these was your favorite? Which reminded you of your own family?

9. Emily?s teacher friend, Paula, has breast cancer. What does she do to help support her friend through this health crisis? What suggestions do you have for women who want to help a friend fight this battle?

10. Given Detective Grady Rodriguez?s marital history, how is his relationship with Emily ironic? What has he learned about marriage and priorities?

11. What was Derek?s ultimate opinion of Grady, and what does this say about Derek as a man?

12. Grady?s Uncle Luis says, ?You?re a good man, Grady, and a good detective. You have proven that time and again. Your instincts are solid, and your heart is on the side of the angels.? But Grady isn?t so sure he deserves such praise. What mistakes has Grady made, and how do they impact what he does for a living? How do they make him a good man for Emily Dobbs?

13. Ultimately, a lot of pressure is put on Dani to help Detective Rodriguez unravel the truth about Evan. How did what happened to Grady?s daughter enable him to navigate these delicate emotional waters with Dani?

14. What function does gardening play in Dani?s recovery?

15. Of all the characters in MENDING FENCES, who do you like and respect the most? Who do you like the least and why?

Author Bio

Sherryl Woods is the bestselling author of more than 100 mystery and romance books. With a degree in journalism from Ohio State University, Sherryl began her career as a writer by working in the newspaper business. The theme of enduring friendships and families is always central to Sherryl's books, including her latest *Chesapeake Shores* series ? THE INN AT EAGLE POINT, FLOWERS ON MAIN and HARBOR LIGHTS.

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