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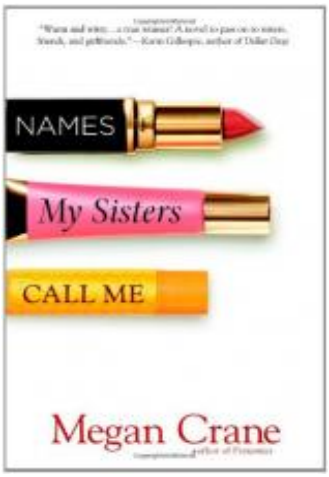
# Names My Sisters Call Me

by Megan Crane




## About the Book

Courtney, Nora, and Raine Cassel are about as different as three sisters can be. Nora, the oldest, is a typical Type A obsessive who believes there is a right way and a wrong way to do *everything*. She maintains an updated spreadsheet of slights and alliances, and six years later has not forgiven Raine, the middle sister, for ruining her wedding day. Raine is Nora's opposite --- wild child, performance artist, follow-your-bliss hippie chick who fled to California after the wedding fiasco.

The only thing the two sisters have in common is their ability to drive Courtney, their youngest sister, crazy. When Courtney's long-time boyfriend proposes, she decides it's finally time to call a family truce and bring the three sisters together. After all, they're all grown-ups now, right? But it turns out that family ghosts aren't easily vanquished, and neither are first loves. Reconnecting the sisters also means re-examining every choice Courtney has made in the last six years, right down to the man she's about to marry.

## Discussion Guide

**1.** The three sisters in the book think of themselves as being very different from one another. Why do you think it?s important for them to think so? Are they as different from each other as they think?

**2.** Which of the three sisters reminds you the most of yourself? Why?

**3.** Have you ever had to deal with sister/sibling rivalry in your family? How did you handle it?

**4.** At the end of the book, Courtney gets what she said she wanted: her family, all together. She thinks, ?It felt good to see them all, even though I knew nothing had been solved. I thought of my mother?s Cassel Cake, her acknowledgment that no one dessert could please all three of us. We were sisters. We knew each other best, and least. We would always

want different cakes. We?d probably always fight about it. The important thing was we were all here.? Do you agree with Courtney that what matters is that the family is all together? Are you satisfied with this ending?

**5.** Courtney spends part of the book worrying about Matt Cheney, even lying to Lucas about what she?s up to. She almost kisses Matt, and sneaks out to see him perform. How did her behavior make you feel? Do you think what she did constitutes as cheating?

**6.** Lucas suggests at one point that ?to the casual observer, [Courtney?s actions] might look a lot like someone who doesn?t want to get married.? Do you think Courtney wants to get married? Do you think she?s ready?

**7.** Matt and Raine?s relationship is never completely spelled out in the book. What do you think is between them? Where do you think they?ll end up?

**8.** Do you think Raine knew about Courtney?s relationship with Matt all along? How do you think she felt about it?

**9.** Matt confesses his love to Courtney, and asks her, six years later, to come be with him and live with him in San Francisco. Do you think he means it? Do you think he would have said these things if Courtney wasn?t engaged to Lucas? What do you think he?d have done if Courtney said yes?

**10.** At the end of the book, many family secrets have come to light, and Courtney feels much closer to Norah than she does to Raine, which is a reversal of her feelings for her sisters at the beginning of the book. Do you think Raine and Norah?s feelings have changed for Courtney? What about for each other?

**11.** Raine thinks of herself as a free spirit, and an artist on the cutting edge. What do you think her photographs say about her? What do you think she thinks they say about her?

**12.** Who?s your favorite sister? Is she the one like you, or not?

## Author Bio

I was born in Houston, TX. I have been informed that this means that when (not if) Texas secedes from the Union, I can live there.

I grew up in New Jersey. I never bore even a passing resemblance to Stephanie Plum or any character from the Sopranos.

I went to Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, NY. I wore a great deal of black and smoked too many cigarettes. Sometimes I also went to class.

After college, I lived in Hoboken NJ, Manhattan, and Atlanta GA. And also, my parents' house. I was, at various points: a customer service representative at a medical laser company, a temp at various industrial sites and one weird design

firm in Georgia, a paralegal, a data entry clerk, a special events assistant, a bookseller (which means a drone in a corporate bookstore) and a donor relations coordinator for an alumni association. I distinguished myself at all of these jobs with my bad attitude and all the writing I did on the sly, using company resources.

After four years of this, I decided to go to graduate school. I arrived in England in the fall of 1998 and started an MA course at the University of York. In the fall of 2003, I successfully defended my PhD thesis and thereby completed my academic odyssey.

My PhD thesis was entitled: Infection, Fatalism, and Fiction: Representations of the AIDS Crisis in the Works of Larry Kramer, David Wojnarowicz, David Feinberg, and Tony Kushner. That and the rain nearly did me in!

I still haven't decided if I will attend my graduation ceremony in July, where I will be expected to wear a very funny-looking hat.

I sold my first book to Warner Books in 2003. English as a Second Language will be out in August 2004.

Now I live in Los Angeles, where I am unreasonably obsessed with the good weather and where I am also becoming more and more blonde.

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**Publication Date:** April 11, 2008
**Paperback:** 336 pages
**Publisher:** 5 Spot
**ISBN-10:** 0446698563
**ISBN-13:** 9780446698566