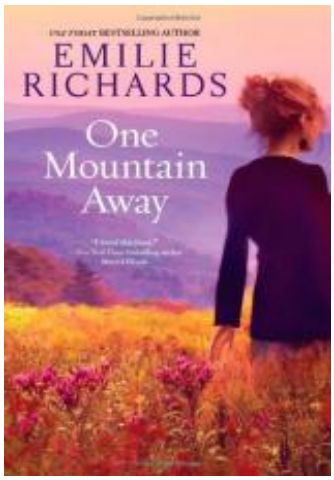
ReadingGroupGuides
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One Mountain Away

by Emilie Richards



About the Book

With nothing but brains, ambition and sheer nerve, Charlotte Hale built a career as a tough, do-anything-to-succeed real-estate developer. She?s at the top of that mountain?but her life is empty. Her friends are as grasping and insincere as she has become. Far worse, she's alienated her family so completely that she's totally lost touch with her only daughter.

One terrifying day, facing her own mortality, she realizes that her ambition has almost destroyed her chance at happiness.

So Charlotte vows to make amends, not simply with her considerable wealth, but by offering a hand instead of a handout. Putting in hours and energy instead of putting in an appearance. Opening her home and heart instead of her wallet.

With each wrenching, exhilarating decision, Charlotte finds that climbing a new mountain?one built on friendship, love and forgiveness?will teach her what it truly means to build a legacy.

Discussion Guide

1. Charlotte uses her First Day Journal as a way to get in touch with her past and feelings. The author uses Charlotte's journal as a way to connect the reader to both. Did the journal give you valuable insight that enriched your understanding of Charlotte's life?

2. Charlotte's reaction to Taylor's pregnancy creates such a huge rift that Ethan and Taylor walk out of the home the family shared. Imagine that your sixteen-year-old daughter has just told you she's pregnant and plans to keep the baby. Could you understand Charlotte's desire to force Taylor to make a different decision? Could you understand Ethan's desire to support Taylor at the cost of his marriage?

3. Early childhood research tells us that lifelong problems between parents and children can begin in infancy. Taylor is a difficult baby and Charlotte an insecure mother. Did you believe that particular dynamic continued and influenced the events that occurred many years later?

4. Taylor insists on making all decisions about her daughter Maddie's health care. Did you admire her stubbornness and the way she put Maddie's needs first? If not, when and why did you begin to think she had shortcomings as a mother?

5. Taylor and Jeremy dated for only a short time in high school, so they really don't know each other well. Can two near-strangers find ways to successfully parent a child they accidentally created and share? Did you believe that by the end they were on firmer ground?

6. One Mountain Away dramatizes three "accidental" pregnancies?Charlotte's, Taylor's and Harmony's. Charlotte sees herself in Harmony, because she, too, was alone and afraid as a young woman. She also wants to help Harmony because she refused to help her own daughter. Do you believe we can make up for a wrong we've committed in the past by reaching out to others? Do you think Charlotte tried to do enough?

7. Analiese Wagner, Charlotte's minister, has had one too many run-ins with Charlotte in the past, so when the book opens it's difficult for her to assume the role of loving pastor and reach out to Charlotte. Do you think Analiese goes above and beyond the call of duty? Do you think in the end their new relationship enriches both their lives? Could you reconcile the Charlotte Analiese knew with the Charlotte we know by the end of the novel?

8. Do you believe that childhood experiences can be so powerful that they continue to affect even the most intelligent, motivated adults? Do you know people who are still trying to make up for childhood deficits?

9. Despite all the problems in their past, at the end of Charlotte's life she and Ethan are able to find their way back to each other. Can love be so true and strong it overcomes years of separation and anger?

10. While **One Mountain Away** is the story of a woman's final months, did Charlotte's transformation and her final reconciliation with loved ones provide a hoped-for happy ending? Are there worse things than dying?

11. Do you believe the women who knew and loved Charlotte will come together in the future at the Goddesses Anonymous house and finds ways to reach out to other women in a meaningful, personal way, as Charlotte intended? Of the "goddesses" in the final chapter, whose story do you hope to read about next?

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

"I loved this book!"
?*New York Times* bestselling author Sherryl Woods

?A powerful and thought-provoking novel that will both break your heart and fill you with hope."
?International bestselling author Diane Chamberlain

"This is truly a marvelous piece of work.?
?*New York Times* bestselling author Catherine Anderson

"Haunts me as few other books have.?
?*New York Times*bestselling author Sandra Dallas

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