ReadingGroupGuides
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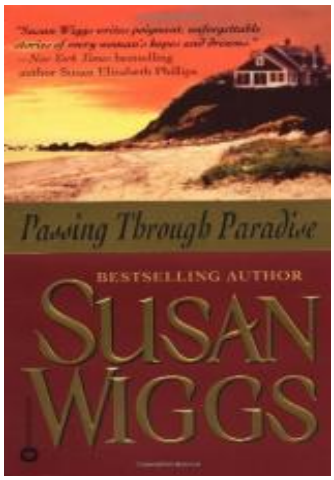
Passing Through Paradise

by Susan Wiggs



About the Book

Less than two years ago Sandra was the happily married wife of Victor Winslow, the favorite son of a town called Paradise, a politician who could do no wrong. Then an accident took Victor's life, leaving Sandra under a dark cloud of suspicion.

Now Sandra has had enough. Her only way out is to rebuild and sell her Victorian beach house at the edge of town. When she hires Mike Malloy, she soon realizes he's skilled with his hands...?and at touching her lonely heart. His fight to secure a future with his children awakens all her buried dreams. But can she trust a man with unbreakable ties to a community she's eager to leave behind, a man determined to discover her deepest secrets? Torn between her need to confront the past and her longing to begin again, Sandra must soon decide where her heart is-in a new life far away, or right here, in Paradise.

Discussion Guide

1. The town of Paradise holds different meanings for Sandra Winslow and Mike Malloy. What are these meanings? What would you define as "paradise" for each of these characters? How would you describe your perfect paradise?

2. In the first scene of the book, we see Sandra making a list about a TV reporter and chopping firewood. What do these two things tell us about her character? What would you say are her strengths and her weaknesses? Do you think her decision to sell her house and leave town is courageous? Are there other options she could have considered?

3. The tragedy of Victor Winslow?s disappearance is officially ruled an accident, yet the locals persist in believing that Sandra murdered her husband. Why? Does the strength of their belief in Sandra's guilt justify their actions toward her? How far would you go to right a wrong that you think has been committed?

4. Mike Malloy doesn?t know what to expect when he meets his high school buddy?s widow, Sandra. What is his first impression of her? How does this impression change over the course of the book? If Mike didn?t need work so badly, do you think he would have declined the job of restoring Sandra's house?

5. At one point Mike describes Lenny and Gloria as having "what a marriage should be." Why does Mike say this? What happened to him in his marriage? Many times in the story the idea of the "perfect marriage" arises. What is the perfect marriage? How does Sandra feel after hearing her parents may divorce? Do you think her mother has good enough reasons to leave her husband?

6. Sandra?s books are available by request only at the library due to questionable material in her books. What is the "questionable material"? Did it bother Mike's daughter, Mary Margaret? Do you think the material warrants censorship? How do you feel about Sandra?s attitude about the censorship of her books?

7. Mike conducts a secret investigation into the night of Victor's disappearance. Why? What role do his feelings for Sandra play? Do those feelings warrant his going behind her back? When is "I'm doing it for your own good" not an acceptable reason for taking a particular course of action?

8. Mike?s ex-wife, Angela, is still a part of Mike's life. In what way do they remain connected? When Angela confronts Sandra, what does Sandra do? What explanation does Mike have for Angela's behavior? If she is happy with her new marriage, why does she act this way?

9. When Victor reveals the truth about himself, his parents reject him. How would you react to such a revelation from your child or someone close to you? Do you think Victor's parents' standing in the community will be affected? His father tells him, "You should never have come back." Is there ever a situ-ation when not knowing the truth is better?

10. Characters in the book make sacrifices and changes in the name of love: Sandra hides Victor's secret, Mike doesn't attend his daughter?s confirmation, Sandra?s father learns Spanish. What are you willing to do for love?

Author Bio

Susan Wiggs is the author of more than 50 novels, including the beloved *Lakeshore Chronicles* series and the recent *New York Times* bestsellers THE LOST AND FOUND BOOKSHOP, THE OYSTERVILLE SEWING CIRCLE and FAMILY TREE. Her award-winning books have been translated into two dozen languages. She lives with her husband on an island in Washington State?s Puget Sound.

Critical Praise

Susan Wiggs creates fresh, unique, and exciting tales."-*Jayne Ann Krentz*"A capitivating, powerfully moving work." -*Catherine Coulter*"Emotionally involving?realistic, appealing protagonists, and a plot compelling in its simplicity....Wiggs sets a new standard for the contemporary reunion romance."-*Library Journal*"Packed full of powerful emotions?a riveting tale with a cast of memorable characters....Wiggs has outdone herself with this one." -*Rendezvous*

"In the tradition of Barbara Delinsky, Susan Wiggs writes poignant, unforgettable stories of every woman's hopes and dreams."-*New York Times bestselling author Susan Elizabeth Phillips*"Susan Wiggs creates fresh, unique, and exciting tales."-*New York Times bestselling author Jayne Ann Krentz*

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