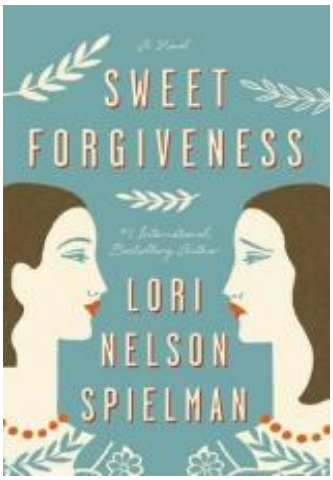
ReadingGroupGuides
The online community for reading groups

Sweet Forgiveness

by Lori Nelson Spielman



About the Book

The Forgiveness Stones craze is sweeping the nation --- instantly recognizable pouches of stones that come with a chain letter and two simple requests: to forgive, and then to seek forgiveness. But New Orleans' favorite talk show host, Hannah Farr, isn't biting. Intensely private and dating the city?s mayor, Hannah has kept her very own pouch of Forgiveness Stones hidden for two years --- and her dark past concealed for nearly two decades. But when Fiona Knowles, creator of the Forgiveness Stones, appears on Hannah?s show, Hannah unwittingly reveals on air details of a decades-old falling out with her mother.

Spurned by her fans, doubted by her friends, and accused by her boyfriend of marring his political career, Hannah reluctantly embarks on a public journey of forgiveness. As events from her past become clearer, the truth she?s clung to since her teenage years has never felt murkier. Hannah must find the courage to right old wrongs, or risk losing her mother, and any glimmer of an authentic life, forever.

Discussion Guide

1. Discuss Hannah?s identity as a career woman, as a girlfriend, as a friend and as a daughter. What role is she most comfortable inhabiting? When is Hannah?s most authentic self revealed to the reader?

2. Hannah?s tenure at WNO is riddled with problems from the onset of the novel. Describe the problem with the ?Hannah Farr Show?as discussed by the network heads, and then consider Hannah?s own point of view. Do you think that Hannah is indeed closed off to her audience, as asserted by the WNO leadership?

3. Trust is an incredibly important theme throughout SWEET FORGIVENESS. Who does Hannah trust most in her life? How does her idea of trust become destabilized throughout the course of the novel?

4. Discuss Hannah?s reunion with her mother. What were her expectations for their meeting? Describe her emotions leading up to, during, and after their reunion. How does she work to rebuild their relationship even after she returns to New Orleans?

5. What role does Jade play in Hannah?s life? How does Jade help Hannah through moments of struggle?

6. How would you characterize Hannah?s relationship with Michael? What was the catalyst for the dissolution of their courtship? Were there any clues along the way that signaled their demise?

7. How does Hannah use baking as a source of comfort throughout SWEET FORGIVENESS?

8. Hannah?s doubts about her childhood memories play out in visceral, tangible ways throughout the novel. Describe her emotional journey. How did the idea of Forgiveness Stones help her to achieve peace? Were you surprised by her choice to move on in life without having a resolute answer to her lifelong question about Bob?s actions?

9. Discuss Hannah?s past with Fiona Knowles, and her feelings leading up to their reunion. What is the turning point in their relationship?

10. Hannah is wracked with guilt after the on-air confession between Dorothy and Marilyn goes awry. Discuss the aftermath of the incident. How does the eventual reconciliation between both women inspire Hannah to move forward in her own life?

11. Why do you think Hannah is initially attracted to RJ? Which of his personality traits does she value most?

12. How does Hannah?s understanding of her father?s life and legacy change over the course of the novel?

13. What was the most surprising part of the novel for you? Were you inspired by the idea of ?viral? forgiveness

Author Bio

Lori Nelson Spielman is a *New York Times, USA Today* and internationally bestselling author whose novels have hit #1 in six different countries. Formerly a homebound teacher in an inner-city school district, she holds master?s degrees in speech pathology and guidance counseling. She lives in Michigan with her husband.

Critical Praise

?Spielman spins an effervescent tale in which betrayals fizzle out into human weaknesses and grudges dissolve into mercy. Bright prose, a plucky heroine, and more than a few plot twists make for a delightful, light read.?

Sweet Forgiveness

by Lori Nelson Spielman

Publication Date: June 2, 2015

Genres: Family Life, Fiction, Literary Fiction, Women's Fiction

Paperback: 368 pages

Publisher: Plume

ISBN-10: 0147516765

ISBN-13: 9780147516763