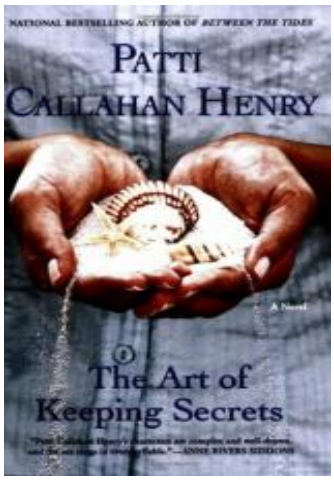
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The Art Of Keeping Secrets

by Patti Callahan Henry



About the Book

Growing up a minister?s daughter, Patti Callahan Henry learned early how storytelling can affect lives. As a child she spent her summers on Cape Cod where she began her love affair with the ocean. She then moved south at the tender age of twelve and found solace in books and stories. Patti weaves all of these elements together in her imaginative work, earning a coveted place among such literary favorites as Anne Rivers Siddons, Cassandra King, and Mary Alice Monroe.

This June, the national bestselling author of **When Light Breaks** and **Between the Tides** returns with **The Art of Keeping Secrets**, a poignant novel set in the Lowcountry of South Carolina. It?s there, amidst the sand and shells, where a tragedy unites two women --- and forces them to face the dark secrets of their past.

Two years after her husband is killed in a solo plane crash, Annabelle Murphy takes comfort in raising her children and spending time with close friends. And just when she thinks she has gotten past the worst of the grieving process, Annabelle receives startling news. The wreckage of her husband?s plane has been found, and Annabelle learns that her husband wasn?t alone. A woman was in the plane with him when it crashed. A shocked Annabelle suffers a crisis of faith and determines to find out who the mystery woman was.

Sofie Milstead knows who the woman that was on the plane. A young dolphin researcher in a sleepy coastal town, Sofie leads a solitary life, never revealing to anyone who she really is. When Annabelle arrives on Sofie?s doorstep --- full of questions and a reminder of the life that Sofie left behind --- the younger woman is forced to face down her demons and let down her guard. As the two women confront their complicated pasts, they discover the undeniable power of love and the unstoppable march of life.

Discussion Guide

1. Did you enjoy **The Art of Keeping Secrets**? What parts did you like best? Least? What do you consider the strongest

aspects of the novel? The weakest?

2. Annabelle struggles to believe in her husband?s love, but he?s not there to talk to. Are there people in your life, dead or merely gone, with whom you wish you could discuss their true feelings about some past event?

3. Like Annabelle, have you ever faced a situation in which something fundamental about your life suddenly seemed uncertain? Were you able to keep on believing? Why or why not?

4. Do you think most married women worry and wonder whether their husbands have remained faithful? If so, why do you think that is? Do men worry about their wives in the same way?

5. How does Patti Callahan Henry use the gathering of shells in this novel? Do you have a ritual in your own life that has helped you through a hard time?

6. Annabelle and her best friends come to the conclusion that ?we all have our secrets.? Do you agree? Do you think we keep secret parts of ourselves from even those we love most? Do you think Knox should have told Annabelle about Liddy and Sofie?

7. Have you lost someone and then discovered something eye-opening --- even shocking --- about them after they were gone?

8. Mrs. Thurgood tells Annabelle that it?s not about what the reader *needs* to hear, but what the reader *wants* to hear. Do you think people who ask for advice want the truth, or to hear their own preconceptions reaffirmed?

9. Liddy and Shawn both talk about the agony of loving someone who doesn?t return the feeling. Have you ever loved someone who didn?t love you back? How did you handle it?

10. If you were Sofie, would you tell Annabelle and Jake *everything* as soon as they arrive in Newboro? Is Sofie justified in keeping her secrets for as long as she does?

11. Why do you think Sofie was attracted to Bedford? Why does she stay with him?

12. Which is your favorite novel by Patti Callahan Henry, and why?

Author Bio

Patti Callahan Henry is the *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestselling author of several novels, including SURVIVING SAVANNAH and BECOMING MRS. LEWIS. She is the recipient of the Christy Award, the Harper Lee Award for Alabama?s Distinguished Writer of the Year Award, and the Alabama Library Association Book of the Year. She is the cohost and cocreator of the popular weekly online live web show and podcast "Friends and Fiction." She lives in Alabama and South Carolina with her family.

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