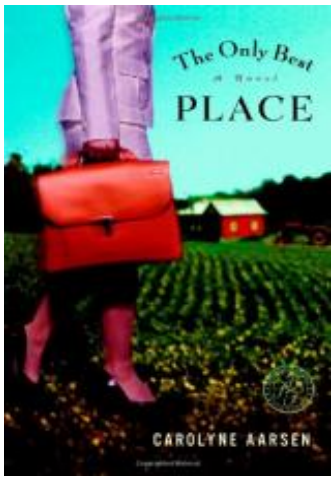
ReadingGroupGuides
The online community for reading groups

The Only Best Place

by Carlyne Aarsen



About the Book

A thriving career . . .
A big-city life . . .
A move that could change her dreams forever . . .

Leslie VandeKeere had a good life: a happy family, a great career (even if it did pull her away from home), and all the energy of urban living. But she finds herself miles away from the city she knows and loves when her husband moves her and the kids back to his boyhood home in Montana to help his mother work the struggling family farm.

Being a farmer's wife was not in Leslie's plan, and now she finds herself dealing with dirty cows, long days filled with monotonous chores, and an extended family she doesn't quite fit into. When her husband hints that the move might be permanent, Leslie must decide how much she can handle.

She has never felt as alone as she does surrounded by so much family. And as she faces questions about her marriage, her future, and faith in God, Leslie struggles to find the only best place for her heart.

Discussion Guide

1. How realistic was Leslie to you? Could you identify with her?

2. Do you think Leslie was right in her determination to create a distance between Dan and his mother? Why or why not?

3. Leslie did not grow up as a Christian. Discuss her feelings toward the church, God, and the community.

4. The bond between a mother and a child can, at times, be one of the strongest forces in nature. Compare Leslie's

relationship with her son and Wilma's with Dan. How does one affect the other?

5. How do Leslie's relationship with her sister and feelings about her mother affect her interactions with Dan's family and community?

6. Leslie has a deep seated need to be a nurse as well as a mother. Can you sympathize or identify with her needs? Why or why not? Discuss the difficulties working mothers have with their divided loyalties.

7. Leslie moved to the community with the idea that this was only a temporary move. Discuss her changing feelings toward Harland and how they affected her final decision.

8. Leslie had a dream-a house and a yard and a family-that had to shift and change during the course of her stay in Harland. Have you ever had to let go of dreams and plans? How did this affect your relationship with God?

9. During the course of the story, Leslie slowly gets involved in an unhealthy relationship with Dr. John. Could you sympathize with her changing feelings toward Dr. John? How do you think you would respond in her situation?

10. There are times that our life's circumstances push us into places we don't want to go. How do you think God uses these times in our lives to draw us closer to Him?

Author Bio

Since selling her first book in 1997, Carolyne Aarsen has published numerous mass market titles with Steeple Hill and has more coming. Her stories reflect a love of God, family, and rural life. When not writing, she enjoys knitting, scrapbooking, and eating chocolate (who doesn't?). She lives in Alberta, Canada, with her husband and children.

Critical Praise

"Carolyne Aarsen's lonely protagonist, Leslie, may be someone you will love-or she may be someone you actually are. A confused wife, trying to see the sky, she is stranded in her husband's Eden. And the serpents would absolutely love to have a chat."

The Only Best Place
by Carlyne Aarsen

Publication Date: September 18, 2006
Paperback: 336 pages
Publisher: FaithWords
ISBN-10: 0446696811
ISBN-13: 9780446696814