

Marta's Legacy

Book Club Kit

**“Writers like Rivers are why people
buy Christian fiction.”
—*Publishers Weekly***



Table of Contents

A Note from Francine Rivers

Menu Ideas from the Books

Marta's Legacy Timeline of Events

Character Profiles

Discussion Questions

A Note from Francine Rivers

I have learned how blessed I am to have had two strong-willed women in my life. Both my mother and grandmother were women of faith who served others consistently. There were times when I felt pulled between them. As a child, I didn't understand the dynamics of how hurt a mother can be when a child bonds more closely to a grandparent. It can cause a rift between generations. It wasn't until my grandmother moved back to her ranch in the Central Valley that I reconnected and became close to my mom. Mom and Grandma loved one another, but I don't think they were ever able to talk to one another on a deep emotional level later in life.

I walked in my mother's shoes when my daughter and her family moved in with us for two years. My granddaughter, Andrea, was a baby and had difficulty settling down for the night. With two infants, Shannon was often very tired. When I offered to help, Shannon handed Andrea to me. I loved feeding Andrea her bottle of milk and rocking her to sleep each evening. When Shannon took a job outside the home, I spent more time with both grandchildren. I loved every minute of that time, but I could see how the growing bond between me and her children hurt Shannon. I needed to step back so her children would turn to her rather than me. It was difficult.

Knowing what happened between my grandmother and mother helped me do what I needed to do in order to remain close to my daughter.

Continued on next page →


There are so many young families these days struggling to make ends meet. Often, both parents work outside the home. Some grandparents end up rearing their grandchildren. In such cases, it's all too easy for children to become more attached to the grandparents than the parents, and this can cause a rift between generations. Grandparents need to remind the grandchildren how much their parents love them and are sacrificing on their behalf. Never allow help to hinder the relationship between parent and child. We, as grandparents, need to be a bridge between generations.

Both *Her Mother's Hope* and *Her Daughter's Dream* are about mother-daughter relationships over four generations and how behavior, both healthy and unhealthy, can be passed along from one generation to the next. The stories of Marta, Hildemara, Carolyn, and May Flower Dawn will hopefully encourage readers to share their "backstories" with their family members and be open with one another about the experiences that have shaped their lives. Showing love often involves risk and pain, but the results bring great blessings. We can be freed from past hurts and have more open, honest, and truly loving relationships in the days ahead.

Loving like Jesus means sharing one another's burdens. It also means accepting people for who they are and not defining them by our expectations and dreams. In truth, we have no right to interfere with God's plan. When we do, we suffer and bring suffering upon those we love. Like Marta's mother, we want to give wings to our children so they can fly in faith while we watch the miracle of God's plan unfold in their lives.

Francine Rivers



A still life photograph of a table setting. In the foreground, a white lace tablecloth is draped over a dark surface. To the right, a small wooden bowl contains several pats of butter. In the background, a loaf of bread is visible on a wooden cutting board. The overall scene is set on a dark, textured surface, possibly a table or countertop.

When Mama rang the dinner bell, they washed and ran for the house, taking their assigned seats at the table. Mama served a feast of beef Wellington and steamed garden vegetables soaked in butter. She announced dessert would be chocolate cake.

“Wow!” Ralph whispered to Fritz. “You said she’s a good cook. You were right!”

—*Her Mother's Hope*

Menu Ideas from the Books

In the Marta's Legacy series, food helps bring people together. Women in the series prepare delicious, mouthwatering meals their families gather around.

As your book group meets to discuss this series, you might consider sharing some snacks together inspired by the novels.

Here's a list of menu items to help get you started. A quick internet search will turn up recipes to try for these dishes.

- **Chelsea buns**
- **anise cookies**
- **chocolate éclairs**
- **cucumber sandwiches**
- **Scottish shortbread**
- **sponge drops with jam**
- **egg salad and dill sandwiches**
- **cream-filled strawberry meringues**

Timeline of Events

Take 10-15 minutes and discuss one or two of these events with your book group. How do you think you might have responded to these events if you were one of the characters in the story?

World Events

Events from the Books

1889

Marta Schneider is born.

1901

Her Mother's Hope begins in Steffisburg, Switzerland. Marta is twelve years old.

1912

The RMS *Titanic* hits an iceberg on April 14, 1912, and sinks a few hours later, early in the morning of April 15.

1912

Marta emigrates to Montreal, Canada. On her voyage she thinks about the RMS *Titanic*.

1921

The Waltert family moves from Canada to California in December.

1929

The Great Depression begins with the stock market crash on October 29.

Timeline of Events

1933

On March 4, Franklin Delano Roosevelt is sworn in as the United States's thirty-second president.

1939

Germany invades Poland on September 1, and World War II breaks out in Europe.

1939

Hildie meets Cale "Trip" Arundel, an aspiring med student from Colorado, at Samuel Merritt Hospital, where she is working as a nurse.

1941

On December 7, Japanese planes attack Pearl Harbor and the U.S. enters World War II.

1941

Two weeks after the Pearl Harbor attack, on December 21, Hildie and Trip get married.

1944

The war begins to turn in the Allies' favor after D-day on June 6.

Timeline of Events

1945

Germany surrenders and the Allies celebrate Victory in Europe Day on May 8.

1947

Hildie and Trip's daughter, Carolyn, is born in May.

1950

Hildie quits her job and soon realizes she is relapsing with TB. She returns to the sanatorium early in 1951, and Marta moves in with the family a few months later. *Her Daughter's Dream* begins.

1963

On November 22, President John F. Kennedy is assassinated in Dallas, Texas.

1965

The first U.S. combat troops arrive in South Vietnam in March, signaling the start of the ground offensive in the Vietnam War.

1965

Charlie, a junior at the University of Southern California, drops out of school to enlist in the Marine Corps.

Timeline of Events

1970

After her best friend overdoses, Carolyn disappears in San Francisco for a time and gets pregnant. An encounter with a stranger finally prompts her to head home to Paxtown to seek help from her parents.

1971

May Flower Dawn is born in February.

1973

President Richard Nixon officially orders the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Vietnam.

1978

Carolyn marries Charlie's boyhood friend Mitch Hastings, and she and Dawn move into his house in Healdsburg.

1986

The summer after Dawn's first year of high school, she meets Jason Steward, who invites her to join the youth group.

Timeline of Events

1990

The first Gulf War begins when Iraq invades Kuwait in August.

1990

After being separated from her high school boyfriend, Jason, for three years, Dawn starts her third year of college, only to run into Jason on campus. Their reunion quickly turns into an engagement and they get married on December 21.

2001

On September 11, in the worst attack on American soil, nearly three thousand people are killed.

2003

The first U.S. troops are deployed to Afghanistan at the start of the new year. On March 19, Operation Iraqi Freedom begins.

In May, Jason receives his deployment orders and heads overseas.

2004

Dawn travels across country to return home and asks her grandmother, Hildie, and mother, Carolyn, to join her in Jenner by the Sea.

2010

Jason is seriously injured in Afghanistan on his third tour of duty. Carolyn and Faith fly to Germany to meet him.

Character Profiles

The Marta's Legacy series is a two-part saga that spans the early 1900s to the present day, chronicling the lives and relationships of four generations of mothers and daughters in one family—Marta, the steadfast, stalwart matriarch of the family; Hildemara, a nurse who never felt like she lived up to her mother's expectations; Carolyn, who grows up a latch-key kid and gets swept into the drug culture of the 60s; and May Flower Dawn, the youngest granddaughter who feels compelled to bridge the chasm between her mother and grandmother before her own daughter is born and it's too late.

Take 5-10 minutes to discuss a question or two about each of the four characters. Leave 10 minutes to discuss the three questions following the character profiles.

Continued on next page



Character Profile: Marta

Born in Steffisburg, Switzerland, in 1889, Marta Schneider is fiercely independent, even as a young girl. Encouraged by her mother to fly, Marta leaves home and makes her own way in the world, until she meets Niclas Waltert. But even after Niclas convinces Marta to marry him, Marta's independence and drive keeps her from submitting to her husband's wishes and frustrates her when she is forced to follow him around Canada and into California.

- 1 What was a favorite or most memorable scene with Marta?
- 2 Describe Marta's relationship with her mother. How does Marta treat her own daughters?
- 3 What motivates Marta at the beginning of the story? How do you see her change later in life?
- 4 In what ways do you identify with Marta? How are you different?

Character Profile: Hildemara Rose

Hildemara Rose Waltert is born on the prairies of Manitoba in the dead of winter, January 1917. A sickly child, Hildie reminds Marta of her younger sister, Elise, who lacked the ability to stand up for herself. As a result Hildie grows up without being coddled by her mother and feels she can never live up to her mother's expectations. A kind nurse inspires Hildie's nursing career, but tuberculosis keeps Hildie from being a hands-on mother herself.

- ① What was a favorite or most memorable scene with Hildie?
- ② Describe Hildie's relationship with her mother, Marta. How does Hildie treat her own daughter?
- ③ What motivates Hildie at the beginning of her story? How do you see her change later in life?
- ④ In what ways do you identify with Hildie? How are you different?

Character Profile: Carolyn

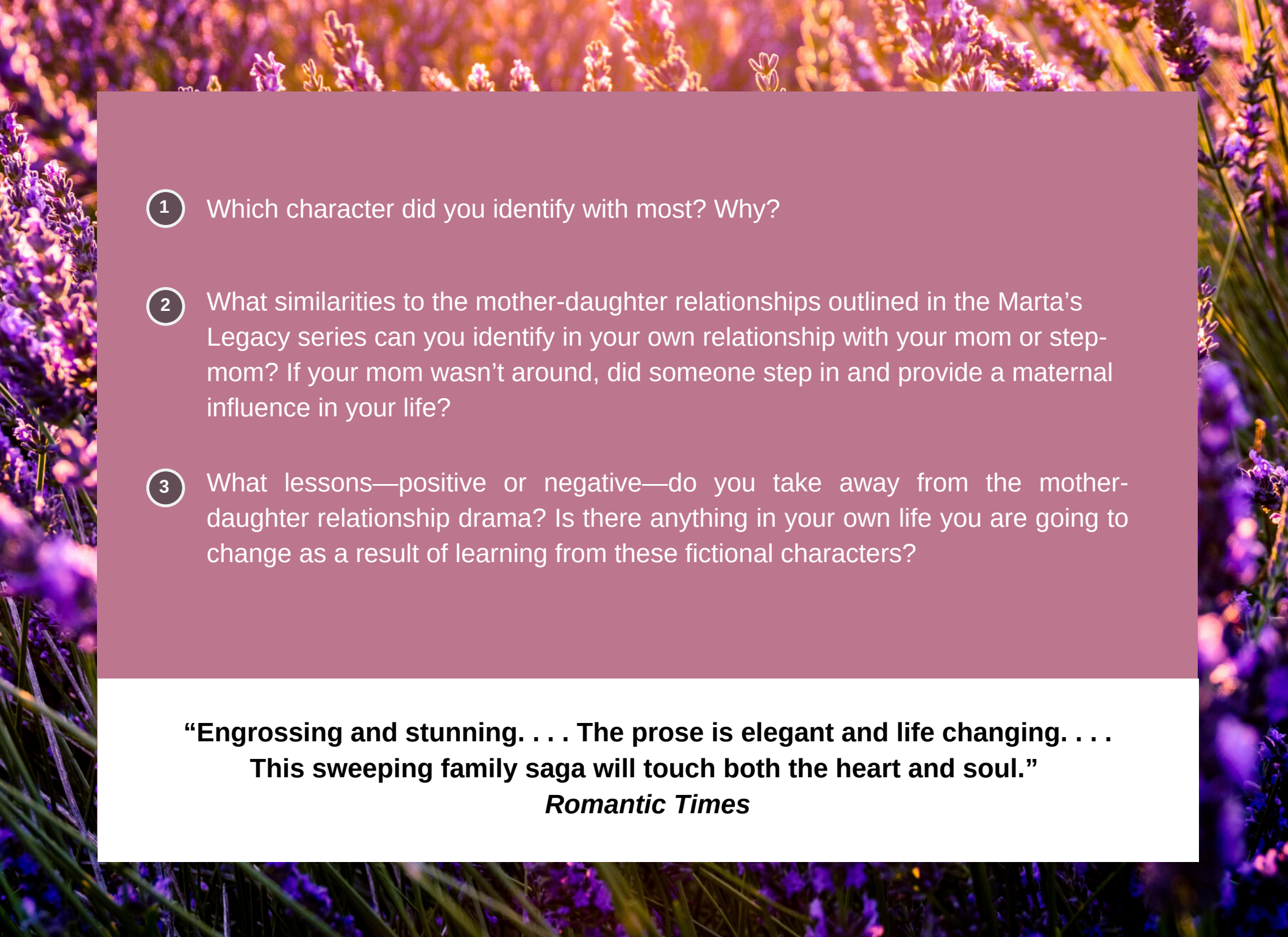
Carolyn Arundel is about four years old when her mother's tuberculosis returns and her grandmother Marta moves in to help care for Carolyn and her brother, Charlie. When Hildie recovers, she returns to work and Carolyn continues to grow closer to her grandmother rather than bond with her mother. Much like her mother, Carolyn believes she is a disappointment to her parents, especially when she protests the Vietnam War and gets lost in the drug culture of the sixties, before eventually returning home unwed and pregnant.

- 1 What was a favorite or most memorable scene with Carolyn?
- 2 Describe Carolyn's relationship with her mother, Hildie. How does Carolyn treat her own daughter?
- 3 What motivates Carolyn at the beginning of her story? How do you see her change later in life?
- 4 In what ways do you identify with Carolyn? How are you different?

Character Profile: May Flower Dawn

While her mother works hard to finish school and prove herself, May Flower Dawn Arundel is raised by her grandparents in the early years of her life. By the time Carolyn has her act together, Dawn has bonded more with her grandmother, Hildie. But Dawn comes to recognize the hurtful mother-daughter relationship pattern that has shaped the women in her family and she determines to change things before her own daughter is born.

- 1 What was a favorite or most memorable scene with Dawn?
- 2 Describe Dawn's relationship with her mother, Carolyn. How does Dawn determine to change mother-daughter relationships in her family?
- 3 What motivates Dawn at the beginning of her story? How do you see her change later in life?
- 4 In what ways do you identify with Dawn? How are you different?

- 
- A background image of a field of lavender flowers in bloom, with the flowers in sharp focus in the foreground and slightly blurred in the background. The flowers are a vibrant purple color, and the overall scene is bathed in a soft, warm light, possibly from the setting or rising sun, creating a gentle, romantic atmosphere.
- 1 Which character did you identify with most? Why?
 - 2 What similarities to the mother-daughter relationships outlined in the Marta's Legacy series can you identify in your own relationship with your mom or step-mom? If your mom wasn't around, did someone step in and provide a maternal influence in your life?
 - 3 What lessons—positive or negative—do you take away from the mother-daughter relationship drama? Is there anything in your own life you are going to change as a result of learning from these fictional characters?

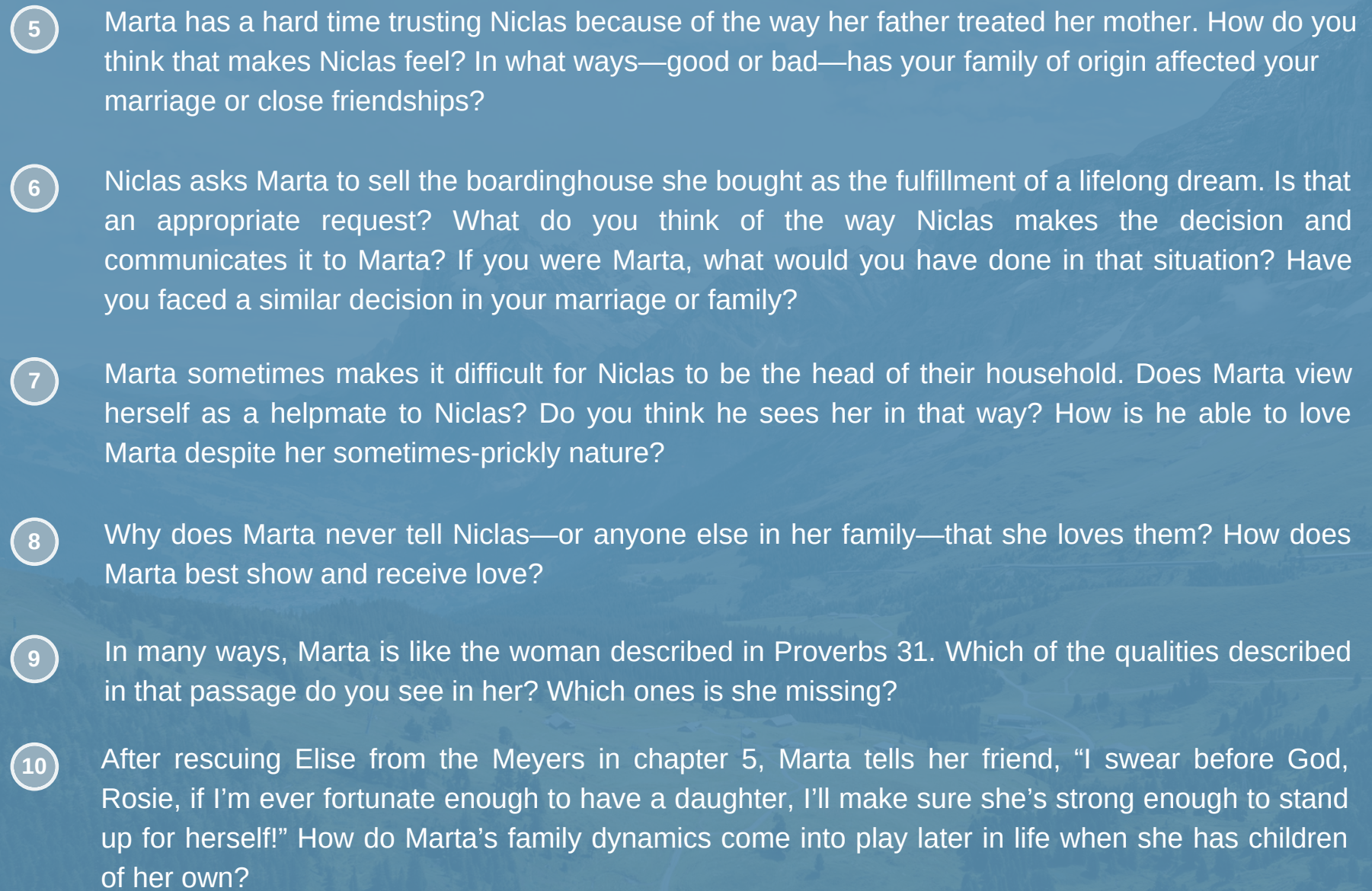
**“Engrossing and stunning. . . . The prose is elegant and life changing. . . .
This sweeping family saga will touch both the heart and soul.”**
Romantic Times

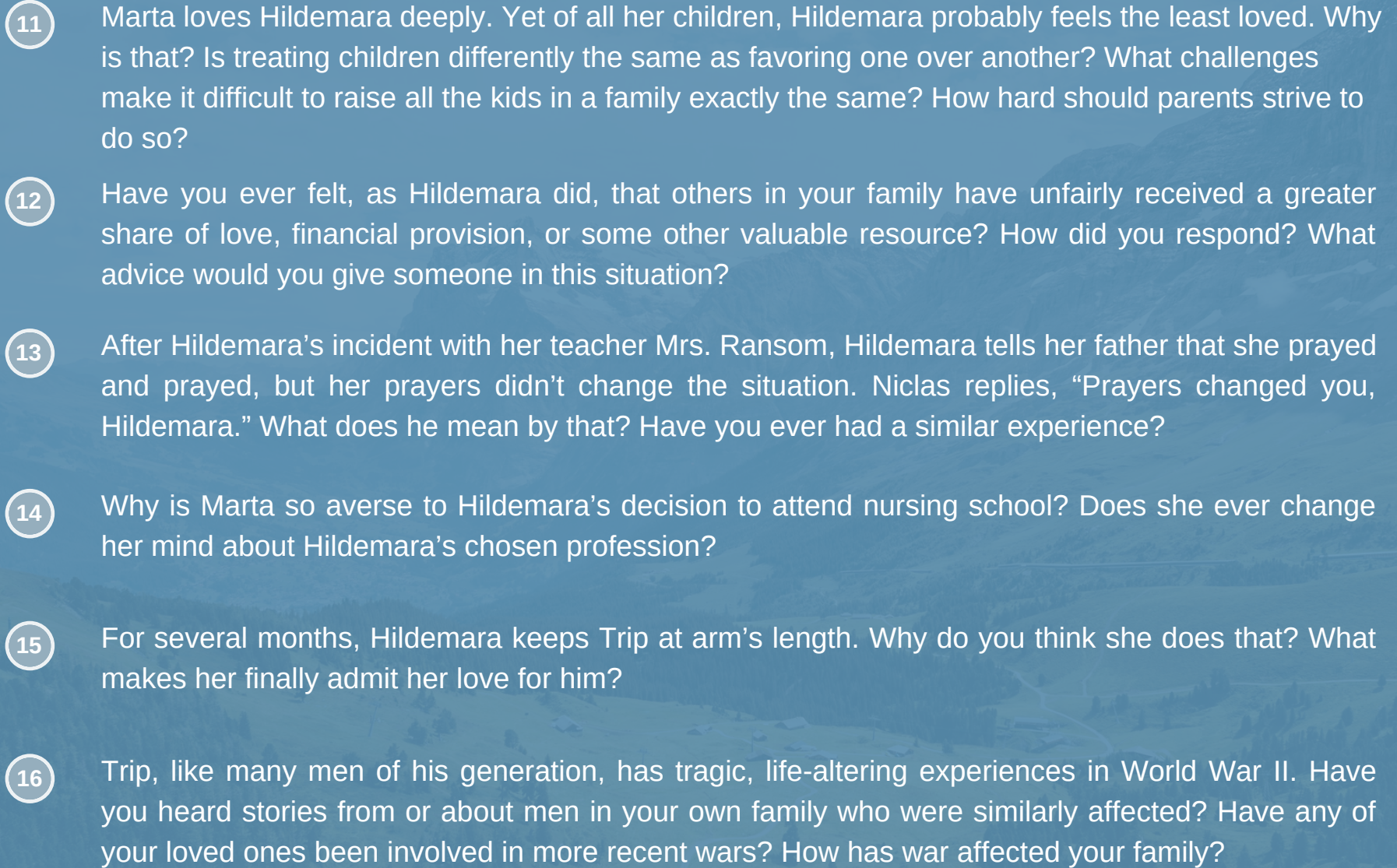
Discussion Guide

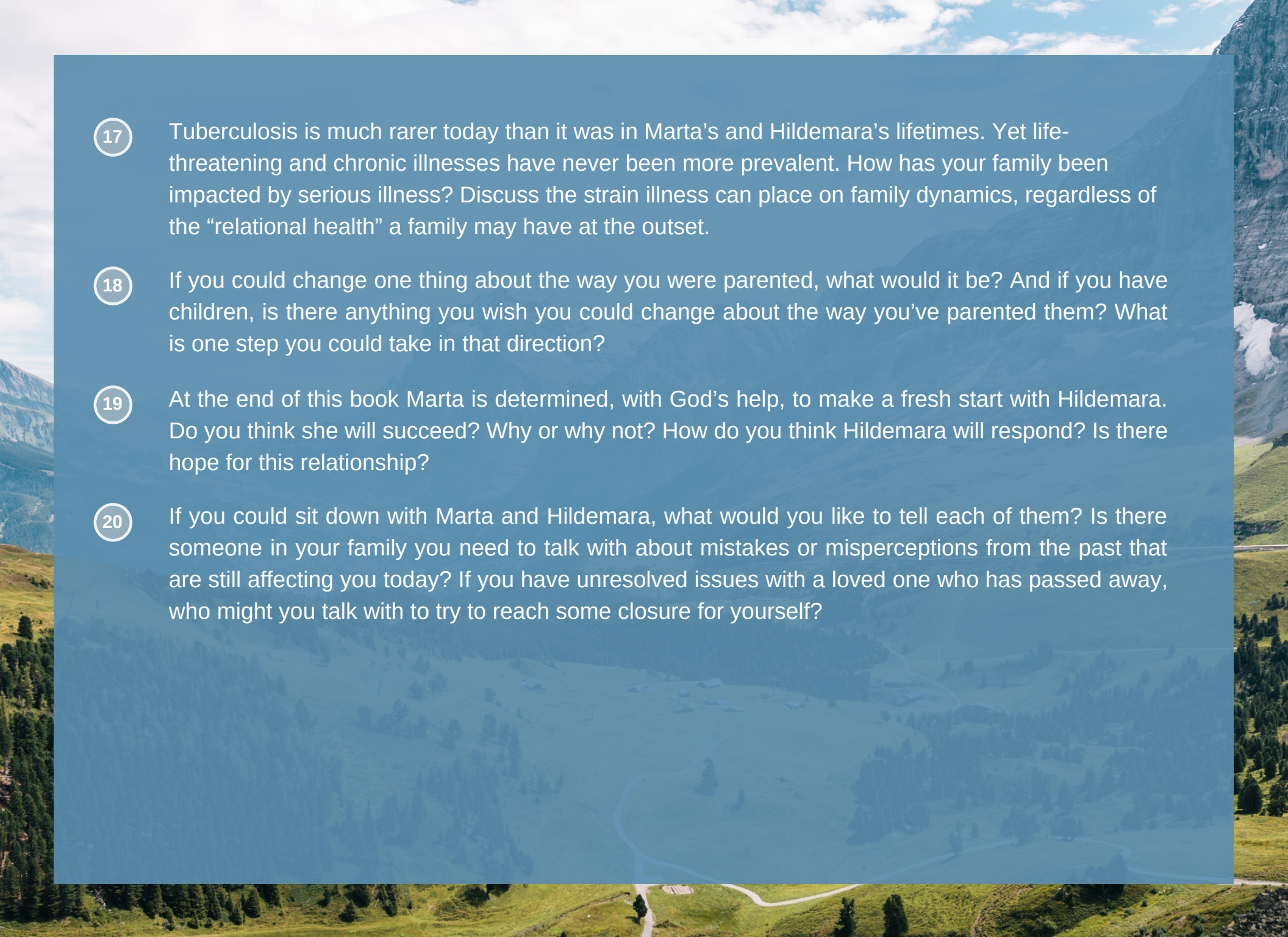
Let each person from your group choose one question from the following list of 20 from each book and discuss as time allows.

Her Mother's Hope

- 1 Marta certainly had a difficult childhood. What factors shaped her the most, for better or worse? How do those influences shape the woman she becomes?
- 2 How does Marta's relationship with her father shape her early beliefs about God and His expectations? How is it different from the way Mama sees God? What seems to make the biggest impression on the way Marta views God? Does that change throughout the story? If so, what causes that change?
- 3 At the end of chapter 4, Marta's mother gave her a blessing when she left home to make her way in the world. In what ways, verbal or otherwise, did your parents give you their blessing? If they didn't, what do you wish they had said to you? In what ways did you—or do you hope to someday—do the same for your own children?
- 4 It has been said that women often marry a version of their father. How is Niclas like and unlike Marta's father? In what ways is Niclas both passive and aggressive? Marta sometimes seems to harbor resentment toward Niclas. Is that fair?

- 
- 5 Marta has a hard time trusting Niclas because of the way her father treated her mother. How do you think that makes Niclas feel? In what ways—good or bad—has your family of origin affected your marriage or close friendships?
 - 6 Niclas asks Marta to sell the boardinghouse she bought as the fulfillment of a lifelong dream. Is that an appropriate request? What do you think of the way Niclas makes the decision and communicates it to Marta? If you were Marta, what would you have done in that situation? Have you faced a similar decision in your marriage or family?
 - 7 Marta sometimes makes it difficult for Niclas to be the head of their household. Does Marta view herself as a helpmate to Niclas? Do you think he sees her in that way? How is he able to love Marta despite her sometimes-prickly nature?
 - 8 Why does Marta never tell Niclas—or anyone else in her family—that she loves them? How does Marta best show and receive love?
 - 9 In many ways, Marta is like the woman described in Proverbs 31. Which of the qualities described in that passage do you see in her? Which ones is she missing?
 - 10 After rescuing Elise from the Meyers in chapter 5, Marta tells her friend, “I swear before God, Rosie, if I’m ever fortunate enough to have a daughter, I’ll make sure she’s strong enough to stand up for herself!” How do Marta’s family dynamics come into play later in life when she has children of her own?

- 
- 11 Marta loves Hildemara deeply. Yet of all her children, Hildemara probably feels the least loved. Why is that? Is treating children differently the same as favoring one over another? What challenges make it difficult to raise all the kids in a family exactly the same? How hard should parents strive to do so?
 - 12 Have you ever felt, as Hildemara did, that others in your family have unfairly received a greater share of love, financial provision, or some other valuable resource? How did you respond? What advice would you give someone in this situation?
 - 13 After Hildemara's incident with her teacher Mrs. Ransom, Hildemara tells her father that she prayed and prayed, but her prayers didn't change the situation. Niclas replies, "Prayers changed you, Hildemara." What does he mean by that? Have you ever had a similar experience?
 - 14 Why is Marta so averse to Hildemara's decision to attend nursing school? Does she ever change her mind about Hildemara's chosen profession?
 - 15 For several months, Hildemara keeps Trip at arm's length. Why do you think she does that? What makes her finally admit her love for him?
 - 16 Trip, like many men of his generation, has tragic, life-altering experiences in World War II. Have you heard stories from or about men in your own family who were similarly affected? Have any of your loved ones been involved in more recent wars? How has war affected your family?

- 
- 17 Tuberculosis is much rarer today than it was in Marta's and Hildemara's lifetimes. Yet life-threatening and chronic illnesses have never been more prevalent. How has your family been impacted by serious illness? Discuss the strain illness can place on family dynamics, regardless of the "relational health" a family may have at the outset.
 - 18 If you could change one thing about the way you were parented, what would it be? And if you have children, is there anything you wish you could change about the way you've parented them? What is one step you could take in that direction?
 - 19 At the end of this book Marta is determined, with God's help, to make a fresh start with Hildemara. Do you think she will succeed? Why or why not? How do you think Hildemara will respond? Is there hope for this relationship?
 - 20 If you could sit down with Marta and Hildemara, what would you like to tell each of them? Is there someone in your family you need to talk with about mistakes or misperceptions from the past that are still affecting you today? If you have unresolved issues with a loved one who has passed away, who might you talk with to try to reach some closure for yourself?

Her Daughter's Dream

- 1 Both Hildie and Trip miss some obvious signs that something traumatic has happened to Carolyn. What are they? Later, in chapter 4, when Hildie and Trip argue about Hildie's going back to work, Trip says, "A little girl shouldn't be alone so much. Things could happen." Discuss the irony in that statement. What is it about their family dynamics that makes Carolyn vulnerable to a predator like Dock?
- 2 Do you think Hildie's character changes from book 1 to 2? If so, how does she change and why? Did you like her more or less in this book?
- 3 Carolyn runs away—literally and figuratively—after getting the news of her brother's tragic death. Is that a realistic response? Why or why not? Have you ever wished you could run away from a painful reality? How did you deal with it? Have you ever been in the place of Carolyn's parents and grandmother—not knowing the whereabouts of someone you love? What was that like? What advice would you give someone who is facing such a situation?
- 4 When Carolyn meets Mary in Golden Gate Park, Mary says she felt an impulse to make extra sandwiches that morning, even though she had no idea why. Have you ever felt God nudging you to do something you didn't understand? Did you follow through on that impulse? Why or why not?

- 5 After Carolyn comes home following her two-year disappearance, neither Hildie nor Trip presses her for details about what happened. Do you think that is wise? How does this both help and hurt Carolyn? In your own life, how can you balance being nosy with being concerned for those you love?
- 6 When Carolyn graduates from college and pays off her debt to her parents, Trip and Hildie give the money back to her. Were you surprised by Trip and Hildie's action? Why or why not? Why is it hard for Carolyn to accept their gift? Have you ever given or received an unexpected, extravagant gift? What was the motivation behind it? What was the response?
- 7 For many years, Carolyn finds more appealing fellowship and support in AA than she does in the church. Why is that? What does that say about AA? About the church? What finally changes Carolyn's view of Christians? Do you know anyone who has a negative view of the church? What could you say or do to encourage them to give the church another chance? What other influences does God bring into Carolyn's life to show her the truth of His love for her?
- 8 Near the end of the story, Hildie reflects that God sent Mitch to rescue her, just as he had rescued Carolyn years earlier. In what ways does Mitch "rescue" Carolyn? How might her life have been different if she had never married? If she had married someone less understanding and supportive?
- 9 Marta's choice not to move to Jenner by the Sea with Hildie and Trip seems to finally make the gap between mother and daughter so wide it can't be crossed. Why does Hildie think Marta doesn't want to move in with them? What does Marta really want? Why are they unable to discuss it rationally?
- 10 In chapter 30, when Dawn and Carolyn go to visit Marta for a week, Marta says that "making things easier on your children is sometimes the worst thing you can do." Do you agree or disagree? How do you see this illustrated in the story? In your own life?

- 11 How does Marta change over the course of the two books? What changes her the most? In what ways is she still the same?
- 12 When Dawn confesses to her mother that she slept with Jason, Carolyn's response is gracious and nonjudgmental. How do Carolyn's own experiences play into her response to Dawn? How would you respond to such a confession from your son or daughter? How would you like to respond?
- 13 How does Dawn's experience of the church after she sleeps with Jason differ from Carolyn's experience after returning from Haight-Ashbury? Why is it different? How does Paster Daniel's gracious response affect Dawn's future and her walk with Christ? Have you ever been in a position to counsel someone who has made a mistake they think cannot be forgiven? What did (or would) you say?
- 14 Near the end of the story, Dawn makes an important decision that affects the life of her unborn child. How might her struggle with miscarriage and infertility have affected her decision? What would you have done in Dawn's place? Discuss her choice not to talk about it with either her husband or her family. Was that the right way to handle it? Why or why not? How do you think Jason felt when he learned what had happened?
- 15 In chapter 55, Dawn reads this excerpt from Marta's journal: "We try to do a little better than the previous generation and find out in the end we've made the same mistakes without intending." How do you see this illustrated in the story? How have you seen negative behaviors easily turn into a habit in your own life, as Hildie mentions in chapter 56?

- 16 When the three generations (Hildemara, Carolyn, and May Flower Dawn) finally sit down to talk, they discuss many of their “family secrets.” Discuss the revelations and the effect of finally getting them out into the open. Are you satisfied with what they talk about and how it goes? In what way do you wish it had been handled differently? Are the responses realistic and/or what you expected?
- 17 At one point, Marta tells Dawn that people either weigh you down or give you wings. How do some of the characters in this saga give people wings? What can you do in your own relationships to give those you love wings instead of weighing them down?
- 18 While Scripture makes it clear that children are not held responsible for their parents’ sins (see Ezekiel 18:20), it’s also true that destructive patterns tend to continue in families and have a negative impact on successive generations (see Exodus 20:5). Over the span of these two novels, what relationship patterns are repeated between mothers and daughters? Between grandmothers and granddaughters? In what ways are the patterns finally broken? Is the resolution realistic? What relationship patterns—either negative or positive—have occurred in your family? If the patterns are negative, what have you done or what could you do to break them?
- 19 Are there secrets in your family—either from generations past or from the present? To whom would you like to talk about these secrets? What kind of response do you think you would get? What response would you hope for?
- 20 This novel contains many relationships, conversations, rifts, and moments of reconciliation. Take a few minutes to list some of your favorite scenes and tell why you were especially touched or challenged by them.

Follow Francine Rivers Online

Facebook: [@FrancineRivers](#)

Twitter: [@francinerivers](#)

BookBub: [@francinerivers](#)

Goodreads: [@Francine_Rivers](#)

Francine's website: [francinerivers.com](#)

Subscribe to the Francine Rivers Insiders Club newsletter on [francinerivers.com](#) to get updates delivered directly to your in-box!