

I turned fifty while writing *Her Sister's Shoes*. With my youngest headed off to college, I experienced a mini mid-life crisis in 2014. Both Jackie's and Sam's characters were outlets for what I was feeling at the time.

- 1) For those of you facing fifty or who have already reached the mid-century mark, did you relate to Jackie's identity crisis? If so, how?
- 2) Women often leave something of themselves on the table when they get married and start a family. While Jackie continued to work as an interior designer, she gave up an opportunity to make it big in New York. What personal sacrifices did you make for your family?
- 3) Sam experiences mixed emotions about her only child leaving for college. If you are an empty nester, did you find it difficult to transition into a life that doesn't center around your children? What are some of the things you do together as a couple that you couldn't do before?
- 4) What types of things did you find that interest you, as an individual, when you became an empty nester?
- 5) If you have a child going off to college soon, are you looking forward to spending time alone with your husband or are you dreading it?
- 6) Take a moment to talk about Lovie's odd behavior. Do you think she is in the early stages of Alzheimer's disease or is her forgetfulness normal for a woman her age? Have any of your loved ones ever experienced similar behavior? Do you think the Sweeney sisters do a good job of sharing the concern for their mother's issues?
- 7) The three Sweeney sisters are very different. Do you think the shoes used for the chapter headings match their personalities? Which sister did you relate to the most and why?
- 8) Curtis forces Faith to steal money from her family's business. What would you have done in the same situation?
- 9) Faith stays in an abusive relationship out of desperation. Did you relate to her feeling of hopelessness or did you feel frustrated with her for not getting help?
- 10) Empathy is one of the major themes of the novel. In a moment of anger, Jackie says to Sam, "Don't you dare talk to me about shoes. Until you've walked a mile in mine." Spend some time talking about empathy. Does today's generation lack the ability to understand and share the feelings of others?
- 11) What will stay with you the most about *Her Sister's Shoes*?