

Magnolia Nights Discussion

- 1) In the opening scene of *Magnolia Nights*, when Ellie returns to her grandmother's house after several decades, she has flashbacks of people who were once important to her. One of those flashbacks is of a little girl with dark hair. Have you ever felt like someone important was missing from your life?
- 2) Other than your family, talk about the people who played important roles in your childhood. A nanny or teacher or housekeeper. What made them special to you? Have you kept in touch with them?
- 3) Have you ever returned to a special place after a long absence? Your grandmother's home or a vacation cottage. Talk about what that experience was like. How things have changed from the way you remembered them. Are the buildings bigger or smaller? Did something that once scared you now seem innocuous?
- 4) Have you ever experienced something so traumatic that your mind blocked it out? Share that experience and talk about what measures you took to recover those memories and come to terms with the pain that caused you to block it out.
- 5) When Ellie first meets her long-lost twin, she feels compelled to give her half of her inheritance. Once Lia has shown her true colors, however, realizing it's her responsibility to protect the money, Ellie

changes her mind. Talk about what you would have done in her shoes. Should she have split her inheritance anyway. Do you think she made the right decision in giving Lia any money at all?

- 6) Who is Lover Boy, the man Lia was planning to run off with? Is he her husband or a lover? Speculate about what happens to Lia in the sequel, *Beyond the Garden*.
- 7) With her heart failing, Ashton did the best she could to take care of her daughters. Would you have done anything differently?
- 8) How do you think Ashton got Lia out of the house? Talk about the events during that time frame.
- 9) I chose to end *Magnolia Nights* at this certain point for a reason. I had enough material for a sequel with a completely different storyline, and for plot purposes, I needed a chunk of time to pass. Reviewers have criticized the ending for being abrupt. How did you find the ending? Are you excited to read the sequel?