

the

MOMENT

BETWEEN



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The Moment Between

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PRAISE FOR *THE MOMENT BETWEEN*

“The Moment Between is a heart-wrenching story, beautifully rendered by an exciting new author who shows the courage it takes to step out of the moment of ‘what was’ and ‘is’ and grasp hold of ‘what can be’ through the hope and promise God offers. This is a novel that should not be missed.”

—FRANCINE RIVERS, BEST-SELLING AUTHOR OF *REDEEMING LOVE*

“Nicole Baart’s The Moment Between is an exquisite look at the angst- and love-filled relationship between sisters. Baart skillfully paints this picture with the tenderness and empathy of a master artist, creating a work that will not soon be forgotten. This book is a treasure that should not be missed.”

—ANGELA HUNT, BEST-SELLING AUTHOR OF *THE FACE*

“Haunting and evocative, The Moment Between is a stunning literary work. Nicole Baart captures beauty and madness alike in the finely wrought net of her immaculate prose, weaving a tale of the ties that bind as only a master storyteller can.”

—TOSCA LEE, AUTHOR OF *DEMON: A MEMOIR*

“The Moment Between is a stark, agonizingly beautiful treatise on family, human frailty, and suffocating regret. With breathtaking prose, an everywoman heroine, and a twisting journey, Nicole Baart unfolds hope in the darkest circumstances.”

—MARY DEMUTH, AUTHOR OF *DAISY CHAIN*

“Beautiful, complex, and rich. The great mystery at the heart of The Moment Between is not what happened but why. Nicole Baart gracefully peels back the layers to examine sibling love, brokenness, and healing that comes through redemption.”

—TRAVIS THRASHER, AUTHOR OF *GHOSTWRITER*

“A story about the emotional communion of two sisters that is as rich and complex as fine red wine. Nicole Baart’s story of a tragedy and one woman’s yearning for atonement, for answers, and for peace is both gritty and lyrical.”

—LISA MCKAY, AUTHOR OF *MY HANDS CAME AWAY RED*

“Even though Abigail is entirely certain for whom she is searching, she is tragically unsure of what it is she wants or needs to find. The blind devotion of that quest is mesmerizing. Meanwhile, as it has in all her work, Baart’s elegant prose becomes a lyric melody, its own kind of blessing to story and reader.”

—JAMES CALVIN SCHAAP, AUTHOR OF *ROMEY’S PLACE*

*So we must keep apart,
You there, I here,
With just the door ajar
That oceans are,
And prayer,
And that pale
sustenance,
Despair!*



EMILY DICKINSON
"I CANNOT LIVE WITH YOU"

*I had been hungry
all the years;
My noon had come,
to dine;
I, trembling,
drew the table near,
And touched the
curious wine.*

†

EMILY DICKINSON
"HUNGER"

∞ *She left the world the same way that she had entered it: swathed in robes of scarlet so red and angry and portentous as to be mistaken for black.*

The latter crimson swaddling was the result of a ruptured placenta, a condition which separated mother from daughter for hours while the doctors worked to stanch the flow and which nearly left the seven-pound infant motherless from the moment she took her very first wailing breath. The former was a dirty, ruby-colored wash that spread like a morbid inkblot a few inches up the concave line of her taut stomach and dragged the edges of her white T-shirt into the shallow pool of water where I found her. She was anchored in a bathtub so small she had to bend her long legs. Beneath the water, the bottom of her jeans and her perfect, manicured feet were indistinct and suffused with carnelian.

I tried not to look at her, not to notice the droop of her pale, waxy arm or her skin like rice paper dotted with fine, translucent hairs. She was so white against all that blood. So white and small and sad that the thought fled through my mind that she was floating in wine, an attempt at salvation instead of blood. Maybe someone—the thought made my heart seize agonizingly with hope—had touched her lips with Eucharist wine. Maybe she was too sick for the host, but someone had still taken pity on her and offered viaticum with a vintage so sacred it drowned her in forgiveness. I could almost imagine dipping a fine-stemmed glass beneath the surface and lifting the heady

merlot to my lips. A toast to a grand entrance now bookended by an even grander exit.

Instead, I vomited into the toilet beside her upturned wrist.

Later, wiping my mouth with the back of my hand, I sat beside her and watched her face. I was waiting, maybe for a flicker, the smallest breath of movement across her carved features, but I knew she was long gone. She had tried to close her eyes at the end, and her lashes almost rested against smooth, unlined cheeks the exact color of gulf sand. There were no tracks of tears streaking her perfect skin, and her lips were even slightly parted in the semblance of a half smile, a secret crescent moon of understanding, as if she knew something I didn't.

I wanted to shake her. Why? What do you know? Or, more importantly, how could you?

But I didn't shake her; I couldn't. She was my waking nightmare, lying there with the razor positioned perfectly on the edge of the white porcelain tub and two bloody fingerprints beside it as if she had touched the pads of her fingers there on purpose. A signature of sorts. The dips and whorls an admission, her own posthumous confession to the crime she had committed.

There was something in me that hated her for what she had done. But beneath that and rising, swelling upward and outward in a dark, smoky thunderhead of impenetrable clouds was grief. Consuming, enveloping, absolute grief.

When I began to scream, it echoed through the glass-tiled bathroom like thunder.

∞ ABIGAIL BENNETT WAS the definition of unexpected. She was one year on the wrong side of the knife blade that was thirty, but if she turned up at your restaurant and ordered a glass of wine, even high-heeled and clad in a black sheath, you'd card her every time. Petite and narrow-waisted, with a pixie flip of hair the exact color of coffee beans, Abigail could easily pass for sixteen in a pair of ripped jeans and an Abercrombie T-shirt.

Not that she liked looking younger than her age. In fact, most of the time Abigail hated the constant reminders that no matter what she did or where she went, she would not be taken seriously. This explained the harsh line of bobby pins that held her wayward hair out of her face as if the severity of it could add years. It also explained the almost-dowdy clothes, the earth-toned makeup, and the hard, thin line of a mouth that could have been very beautiful.

Once people got past the fact that she wasn't a teenager, Abigail looked very much like the ideal kindergarten teacher. Her stature and dress were the opposite of intimidating, yet there was a spark in her dark eyes as if from time to time a match was struck behind the velvety chocolate of her corneas. These eyes could freeze hell over with a well-timed look, a piercing arrow of unmistakable meaning. But there was also the hint of tenderness in Abigail that translated into quiet strength when paired with the sharp edges that were inevitably unveiled before anyone had a chance to form a false opinion of her. But then again, maybe it was all a facade. She didn't let people get close enough to find out.

In reality, Abigail was not a kindergarten teacher, nor could she remember a phase in her life when she ever wanted to be one. She was an accountant. Numbers were stable, unchanging, and best of all, incapable of being mysterious or of forcing people to act and think and feel in ways that they would not normally act and think and feel. Numbers were predictable; people were not. And because Abigail trusted the reliability of her chosen field, she was good at her job, meticulous and capable of holding the smallest detail in her mind for as long as it was useful.

During tax season Abigail worked more hours than anyone else at her firm, and that was saying a lot. It was why she was made a partner after only five years with the company and why she occupied one of two corner offices, the one with a view of the swampy man-made pond that graced the complex of professional stucco buildings on Key Point Drive. Johnson, McNally & Bennett was a Rosa Beach institution, and though Blake Johnson and Colton McNally could claim most of the honor behind their prestigious position in the community, Abigail knew she filled an important and indispensable role. Southern Florida had its share of widows and divorcées, and for some not-so-surprising reasons they preferred to have a woman handle their money. Abigail was happy to oblige. It kept her busy and the firm in business.

Keeping busy was what Abigail did best. When she wasn't working, which averaged sixty hours a week, she was either running or reheating days-old Chinese takeout in a dented wok. Both activities were little more than a personal experiment; they were representative of the only two things in Abigail's life that she really, deep down hoped to accomplish someday: run a marathon and learn to cook.

The marathon was a goal that she had already partly achieved. On the day of her twenty-ninth birthday, she ran a half marathon in Miami. Abigail could have easily completed it, and in fact, the finish line was in sight only two blocks ahead when she realized it was enough to know that she *could* do it. Crossing the finish line

would have meant that she ran for someone else, that she ran for the glory, the recognition.

So Abigail had slowed down a little and then a bit more until someone thrust a cup of water in her hand and yelled, “You’re almost there!” She smiled her thanks, sipped the water, and folded herself into the crowd while all eyes were watching the other runners throw their arms into the air for the last few triumphant yards.

The cooking, on the other hand, was little more than a pipe dream. Abigail’s greatest accomplishment was adding a diced chicken breast and some soy sauce to leftover chicken chow mein. It was too salty. But propped on her counter in an antique, wrought-iron bookstand was a Williams-Sonoma cookbook with full-color photographs and extensive instructions on how to cook homemade delicacies like potato gnocchi with wild mushroom sauce and baked clams with pine nuts and basil. Every morning, while she waited for the last few drops of coffee to drip into her Gevalia carafe, Abigail would thumb through the glossy pages of the cookbook and imagine what it would be like to make a wine reduction sauce as the sound of laughter filled her apartment. *Someday*, she told herself.

And though there were many somedays in Abigail’s life, she tried not to let the particulars of her existence get her down too much. It didn’t matter that she didn’t have a boyfriend. It didn’t matter that every day plodded on with the same pitfalls and small successes. It didn’t matter that her apartment was quiet but for the hum of her empty stainless steel refrigerator. It was the life that Abigail had chosen, and she was a grim optimist, resigned to the path she was on—she was getting exactly what she had always wanted. So what if it was tilted heavily toward work, personal discipline, solitude? So what if it left little room for the things other people craved? So what if her cupboards were as bare of exotic ingredients as her apartment was bare of cheerful company?

But sometimes, alone in her apartment with the shades drawn

tight, Abigail would stand in front of the full-length mirror on the back of her bathroom door and relax enough to admire what she saw. Tousling her wet hair and practicing a self-conscious smile that showed her teeth—her impossibly white, perfectly straight teeth that were a genetic legacy instead of the result of extensive dental work—Abigail could almost pretend that she was ten years younger and that the world was unfurling itself before her.

For those moments in the steam and warmth, dark ringlets of hair curling around her temples as if she were some Grecian empress, Abigail wished much more for herself than what she had. She wished that she could rewind the clock and find Abby, the girl she used to be, perched on the cusp of her life instead of entrenched in the middle of it with no apparent way out.

Every once in a while, she could gather the courage to admit that it would be a very different life if she had it to do all over again.



When Abigail first came to Johnson & McNally, she had a chance at a different life.

It was no secret around the office that Colton McNally had a thing for the new accountant. He was twelve years older than Abigail and divorced, and that seemed somehow estimable according to Abigail's less-than-high expectations. It wasn't that she would settle for just anyone, but she also didn't enter into much of anything with a long list of prerequisites.

In truth, Abigail found Colton very attractive. She thought his salt-and-pepper hair was distinguished—even though she suspected it came from the hands of a very talented colorist as he wasn't quite forty—and she liked the way his tailored suits fell across the straight line of his shoulders. Best of all, he was nothing like the immature, self-absorbed boys Abigail had dated in college. They had nearly turned her off of men altogether. So when Colton turned his attention toward her, Abigail let him flirt. For a while,

she even stopped wearing the stern bobby pins so that her dark curls framed her rather nicely arched forehead.

And yet Abigail wasn't naive. She knew that her employer loved her because of the photo. It would have been too much to ask for Colton to love her, or at least think he did, because of herself. But while she probably should have been reticent of attention resulting from such a faint and improbable notion, Abigail accepted—almost *expected*—the source of Colton's desire.

The photograph in question hung neatly squared and centered on a fabric-covered board adorning the west wall in the reception room. It was a concession to the more traditional bulletin board, replete with employee photographs that were intended to look candid but often looked overposed.

Abigail knew of the board, she even shot glances at it whenever she could to detect updates and changes, but she was not aware upon settling into her position that tradition dictated a spot for her photo front and center ASAP.

It was her third day of work, and Abigail was immersed in balancing infinitesimal details, worlds away from the air-conditioned office she inhabited when Colton startled her with a quiet "Ahem."

Her head was bowed, and her forearms rested on endless pages that sprouted like an unruly crop of paper weeds across her generous desk. Abigail blinked and raised her eyes, just her eyes, in time to be blinded by the flash of Colton's expensive Canon. He laughed and snapped a few more pictures for which she cleared off her desk, sat up straight, and smiled, thin-lipped and toothy and even coy, trying them all in the hopes that one would be right.

But the next day, Abigail was surprised to see that the photo gracing the quasi bulletin board was the first of the batch. She knew she was looking at herself because seeing the small, hunched form over the crowded desk was a sort of *déjà vu*—she had been there before. If not for that, Abigail would have never believed that the woman staring back at her was her own reflection. The woman in the photograph had luminous—there was simply no other word

for them—*luminous* black eyes of the starry-sky variety: endless and opalescent and dark like a time before the genesis. Like the event horizon of identical black holes—no way out, but no matter, for who would ever want to leave? Beneath the twin universes of those eyes, her lips were slightly parted, pink and full and evocative of bruised raspberries. Her skin glowed faintly (fluorescent light reflecting off all that white paper?), and her shadowy curls were framing and soft. The woman was lovely.

But what unnerved Abigail the most was that Colton had caught her at a moment between. A rare, uncovered moment between expressions: a moment of evaporation before the advent of her surprise became the dutiful smile that spread across her face in the split second after the shutter snapped. This woman was a living mystery.

Abigail wished she knew her.



One day, a few months after she started at the firm, Abigail went into Colton's office to ask him a question about the tax return of a dual citizen living out of country. It was a legitimate question, but Blake's office was closer than Colton's, and her admirer acknowledged that fact the second Abigail rapped her knuckles on the doorframe. She realized almost too late that her presence would be read as an invitation, and sure enough, a smile unfolded across Colton's face like a flag pulled taut in a billowing wind.

"Come in, Abigail! Why don't you close the door behind you? There's something I've been meaning to talk to you about."

Abigail did as she was told and crossed the plush, carpeted floor of Colton's office with her heart stuck fast in her throat.

"But first—" Colton set aside what he had been working on—"what can I do for you?"

Passing him the papers, Abigail lowered herself to balance on the arm of one of the leather chairs facing the wide, black walnut desk.

But Colton raised an eyebrow at her, motioned that she should cross behind the desk to stand beside him.

They had flirted before, secret half smiles conveyed across crowded rooms and careful conversations littered with possibilities. And it seemed that the unmistakable chemistry between Colton and Abigail was a favorite topic around the watercooler, boasting far more people in favor of a match than against it. It was impossible for Abigail not to get caught up in it a little. But she also couldn't help being cautious, and suddenly, with the door closed and Colton looking far more handsome than she remembered from only the day before, she knew that he was a man who wouldn't play games for long.

Colton waved her over again and Abigail moved slowly, explaining about the nonresident and his recent payout from a life insurance death benefit. She had just gotten to the part where he intended to give enough of it away to slip below the line of taxable income when Colton grabbed her wrist and, in one smooth movement, pulled her forward until her face was inches from his. He studied her, still smiling, then kissed her full on the mouth as if he had been intending to do so for a long time.

It wasn't that Abigail didn't want to kiss him back. Actually quite the opposite. It wasn't even that she was stunned by the inappropriateness of such a gesture. Instead, it was a Tic Tac that ruined everything, a burning little grain of peppermint that she inhaled when Colton's lips touched hers.

She drew back, pulling out of Colton's embrace and coughing violently until tears collected at the corners of her eyes. Abigail struggled for a moment, choking mutely as she watched Colton bolt out of his chair and grab her upper arms. When the breath mint was dislodged from her throat and she could feel it hot and peppery on her tongue, she knew it was a very small thing that would be significant in ways that might cause her years of lament.

"I'm sorry," Abigail murmured, utterly mortified for one of the first times she could remember. "I . . ." She couldn't continue.

Colton stared at her, concern and disbelief gathering foglike across his forehead. At first, Abigail thought he might fold her into his arms, that the almost-pitiable comedy of what had just happened would become the sort of story they laughed about months down the road when they told people the tale of how they came together. But then Colton laughed, rubbing his hands up and down her arms. The moment shattered and fell away, disappearing in a shimmer of doubt that made Abigail wonder if she had merely dreamed it.

“As long as you’re okay,” he boomed. And then he sat back down and pretended nothing had happened. He never mentioned it again and neither did she.

Eighteen months later, Colton married Marguerite, the receptionist who was hired at the same time as Abigail. Marguerite was a few years younger than Abigail, but she looked much older due to a succession of bad dye jobs and what appeared to be a lifetime of sun damage spotting her skin. Colton seemed happy; from what little Abigail could discern of her boss’s marriage, he genuinely longed for companionship and Marguerite’s horselike laugh didn’t turn him off so much that he considered her a poor match.

Although it was against her nature, shortly after the happy couple’s beach wedding, Abigail went through a brief stage where she fixated on what might have been. The entire office had once been invited to Colton’s sprawling house only a block off the ocean, and Abigail could almost picture herself the mistress of his columned colonial. What sort of a woman would she be if she were Mrs. McNally? What would she look like offering guests a second martini and lounging in some bright sari that she had bought on their honeymoon?

It was a nice scenario, but Abigail wasn’t one to waste too much energy on regret, and she abandoned such nonsense the same way she set aside every other impossible dream: she placed it firmly out of her mind. A few years later when Blake and Colton approached her about being a partner, she was even able to congratulate herself

that her business card would read *Johnson, McNally & Bennett* instead of *Johnson, McNally & McNally*. She convinced herself that it was much more satisfying this way.

For his part, after their less than romantic encounter in his office, Colton was nothing but a gentleman to Abigail. He treated her with the same respect, the same quiet yet somehow condescending pride of a father figure. Abigail was reduced from a possible lover to the discarded role of a dependable daughter. It was a character she was rather good at playing.



Lou Bennett was a father when he could have been a grandfather.

He met Melody Van Bemmel at Chevy's Café a week after he turned forty-five. It was nearly a blizzard outside, and she blew into the warm restaurant off-balance and trembling as if she were a leaf driven by the vicious wind. When the door slammed behind her, Melody gasped, stomped her booted feet, and flung the hood of her parka back. She smiled shyly, looking around as if her entrance had been staged, as if she were taking her place beneath the spotlight and now that she was front and center she had forgotten her lines.

Everyone in the café glanced up at her for the blink of an eye and then turned back to their coffees and specials of the day without a second thought. Everyone except Lou. He had fallen in love the moment Melody raised her hands to turn back her hood. They were little hands swimming in a pair of men's work gloves that were so big on her fingers they nearly slid off. Lou imagined they were his gloves. He wished they were.

And just as quickly as he longed for her, Lou hated himself for it. She was a child. Her eyes were too clear, her skin too bright for her to even look twice at a man whose own skin was as deeply lined as those etchings he had seen on display in the American National Bank. But when she caught his eye, when her lips pulled up slightly just for him, Lou knew there was nothing that could be done about

it. He was hers, even if she never acknowledged his existence. Even if he loved her in secret until the day he died.

As it turned out, he didn't have to. Melody came to Lou in the most natural, ordinary way: she brushed against the edge of his life and found herself inexorably pulled in. He didn't even know he was drowning until he felt himself reach for her and cling for dear life.

They were married less than a year later, and though Melody was not as young as Lou had imagined, when she walked down the aisle in a confection of white, a little shiver crept up Lou's spine because she did not look twenty-five. *Twenty years*, he thought in the second before the preacher asked him if he would have her and hold her until "death do you part."

Lou said, "I do" without hesitation, but somewhere in the back of his mind he faltered. There was a nagging suspicion, an accusatory guilt that made him wonder if he had made her the happiest woman alive like she claimed or if he had involuntarily ruined her life.

It took Melody almost six years to get pregnant, though they tried to make a baby on their wedding night. She saw doctors and gynecologists and fertility specialists, but no one could tell her why her womb would not swell with a child. For a while, Lou entertained the possibility of joining her at one of her appointments, but those sorts of things made him unbearably uncomfortable. He avoided the conversation he knew Melody wanted to have the same way that he avoided the drawer where she kept her neat pile of lace-trimmed underwear.

When Lou was fifty-one, Melody's cheeks took on a greenish hue in the early morning, and the waist that he so loved to encompass in his enormous hands began to expand. She wouldn't admit it at first—maybe she was scared to hope—but Lou knew almost immediately. Something about Melody had changed, the scent of her skin or the complexity of the air around her when she entered a room. Maybe both. Either way, Lou was relieved. It wasn't him, it had never been him, and now she would be happy. They would be a family.

Lou didn't think much about the baby until the doctor handed him a tiny, tightly wrapped bundle with a pink cap sliding down over her lashless eyes. They were two little commas, those eyes, a break amidst all the words that comprised his many years of life, though certainly not a beginning or even an end. Lou stared at her and realized that he had planned on having a son.

"Abigail Rose," Melody called weakly from the bed. She smiled at him with all the energy she could muster, and her eyes were dancing with tears. "Rose for my mother and Abigail because it's the most beautiful name I've ever heard. I think we'll call her Abby."

What was there to say? It was a fine name, and Lou hadn't wasted a single thought on another. "Pretty," he said finally and brushed his lips tentatively across the soft forehead because it seemed like the right thing to do.

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Lord, make my life an offering.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

∞ NICOLE BAART WAS born and raised in a small town in Iowa.

She is the mother of two young sons and the wife of a pastor. After the adoption of their infant son, Nicole discovered a deep passion for global issues and is a founding member of One Body, One Hope, a nonprofit organization that works with a church and orphanage in Liberia. Visit www.onebodyonehope.org for more information.

The Moment Between is Nicole's third book.

She and her family live in Iowa.

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MOMENT

BETWEEN



READING GROUP

GUIDE



A CONVERSATION WITH THE AUTHOR

1. *How did the idea for *The Moment Between* come to you?*

This novel began nearly a decade ago when I was a naive, first-year teacher in a private school. I was barely equipped to handle routine questions pertaining to my subject matter and wholly unprepared to field inquiries when a young woman in our small community ended her own life. Of course, my students were devastated, and they had no template with which to frame the sort of sadness and horror they were suddenly experiencing. Since I didn't know what to say, I let them talk. And slowly it came out that many of my students ardently believed that suicide was an unpardonable sin. They believed that this poor, tormented young woman was beyond forgiveness. For years, this knowledge rattled around in my heart, looking for an escape, a way to explain why I felt the way I did: that there is grace enough, even for this.

Somehow, nine years later these emotions and convictions began to find their way onto paper, and Abigail and Hailey were born. I almost feel like I can't take credit from there on—the story just came together the way it so often magically does.

2. *You chose a complex storytelling method, intertwining three time frames instead of telling the story chronologically. What inspired you to do it this way?*

In order to truly understand who Abigail is and why she feels compelled to do the things she does, readers have to know her on many different levels. The first-person chapter intros give us a chance to get to know her very intimately. Abigail's thoughts and emotions are laid bare in such a way that I

hope readers can find points of connection with her. Then the present-day, third-person POV that leads off each chapter allows us to live Abigail's life as it is happening. I think there is a real immediacy in these sections. And finally, as I was writing, I realized that it's almost impossible to truly understand Abigail without knowing about her past. She is shaped by her childhood and in particular by her relationships with the members of her family.

The weaving of these narratives made perfect sense to me. It never occurred to me to tell the story chronologically because I believe that there is a certain poetry in the way the past, present, and future are inextricably intertwined in all of our lives. I hoped to capture that in the unique telling of this story.

3. *A good portion of the novel is set on a beautiful vineyard in British Columbia. What about this setting appealed to you, and why do you think Abigail is drawn back there at the end of the story?*

When *The Moment Between* was still in its infancy, I knew that wine would play an important role in the storytelling. Originally I set the book in southern Spain, where I had spent a memorable vacation exploring Andalusia. But my writing partner suggested that maybe Abigail didn't have to go quite so far to find what she was looking for. He recommended the Okanagan Valley, and since I had been there many times and was fond of the area, it turned out to be the perfect setting.

BC's Thompson Okanagan is really an unparalleled place. The never-ending lake, the mountains, the orchards and vineyards, the sunshine—it's amazing. I think it's the ideal location for Abigail to find her home, to discover the place where her soul can finally rest. The whole concept of *terroir*, the idea that where you are matters much, definitely plays into Abigail's return to the place that feels like the home she never had.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *“Abigail Bennett was the definition of unexpected.” Explain. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why? How does Abigail change throughout the book? What is the impetus for that change?*
2. *Hailey’s mental illness affects everyone around her. What sort of emotions does Hailey evoke in you? Do you like her or dislike her? Do you have compassion for her or does she frustrate you? Explain.*
3. *How is Abigail shaped by her youth? What role does Lou play in her life? What role does Melody play in her life? What about Hailey?*
4. *Abigail calls herself a “lapsed Catholic.” Why do you think she has allowed her faith to lapse? Hailey, on the other hand, seems to cling to her faith. Why is her belief system so important to her?*
5. *Why is Abigail so driven to atone for her sister’s death? Do you understand her motivations? Why or why not? Why does she blame Tyler? Do you agree with her assessment of Tyler’s guilt?*
6. *Though she doesn’t claim to be a Christian, until she finds herself obsessed with Tyler, Abigail lives an exemplary, by-the-book life. Hailey, on the other hand, is a Christian, but there seems to be a disconnect between Hailey’s faith and her lifestyle choices. What does this seem to say about faith and actions? Do you agree or disagree? Why?*