

1. One of the first things Tully says to Kate is a lie. Indeed, Tully is quick to lie throughout her life. Do you think this trait is her way of hiding the shames in her past or is it a willful reinterpretation of self? Do these lies and manipulations, big and small, help her ultimately to be more honest about whom she is or do they undermine her ability to face her own shortcomings?
2. From her earliest memory, Tully feels abandoned by her mother and father. How does this sense of being unwanted influence her life? How does her troubled relationship with her mother lead to the decisions she makes in her life? Do children have an obligation of some kind to forgive their parents, even in the face of repeated disappointment? How much do you think childhood heartaches make us who we are?
3. The Kate-Johnny-Tully triangle is one of the fundamental underpinnings of the novel. How does Johnny really feel about Tully? How does Tully feel about him?
4. Kate believes she is Johnny's second choice for love. How does Johnny contribute to her insecurities? How did Tully? How much of a relationship is set in the beginning and how are changes made as we grow?
5. When Chad leaves Tully, she rationalizes away her broken heart by saying, "if really loved me, he would wait for me." What does this reveal about Tully's perception of romantic love? How do these perceptions set the stage for the rest of her life? Do you believe that Tully will ever fall in love?
6. Near the end of the novel, when their friend is on the rocks, both women feel wronged. Certainly Kate has ample reason to feel betrayed, but what about Tully's similar belief? Do you understand why Tully was upset, too? Do you believe that a friend should always reach out, even when great pain has been caused? Or do you believe that true friends would never hurt each other?
7. If you could think of one word that personified the seventies, the eighties, the nineties, and the new millennium (so far), what would those words be?
8. At which moment in the novel did you first notice a hint of tension between Tully and Kate? Who do you feel was to blame for this turning point?
9. Music plays an important role in this novel. What musical memories do you have of your teen years, your twenties, and today? Do you feel, as we get older, that music plays less of a role in our lives? Why do you feel that music so profoundly impacts us when we're "coming of age?"
10. What do you feel Kate was most jealous about with regards to Tully? And what was Tully the most envious of in Kate's life? Jealousy is often wanting what we cannot have. Do you feel that these characters truly could not have the things they wanted? If not, why not?
11. Under what circumstances do you feel a betrayal is unforgivable? Do you feel that any of these characters crossed that line?
12. What role do you see Tully playing in Mara's life, after the pages of the novel are closed?