

Wedding Ring

Reading guide

1. Helen, Nancy and Tessa are very different people, linked by blood but by little else. Did their struggle to forge lasting bonds seem realistic, even familiar? Within your own family, have you experienced moments like these?
2. Tessa and Mack have dealt with their daughter's death in a tragic accident in two entirely different ways. Losing a child is a blow from which many marriages can't recover. What did each of them do that was helpful? What was not helpful? Could you empathize more with one's reactions to grief than the other's?
3. Nancy and Billy have never really talked about their feelings for each other, despite many years of marriage. The circumstances behind their wedding made such an impact on Nancy that every moment she struggled to prove herself worthy of her husband. Do you think marriages like this can survive? Do you know couples like Nancy and Billy who can talk about everything except their own feelings?
4. When Helen lost Fate and others she loved, she distanced herself from everyone and everything, including her new baby daughter. We protect ourselves from pain in many different ways. Could you understand Helen's desire to avoid love so that she could avoid loss?
5. Mack is so desperate for human contact that he almost makes a mistake that could cost him his marriage. In this context, were you able to understand his lapse?
6. Tessa's desire for revenge is so strong that it almost costs her what's left of her family. Could you imagine yourself in her position? Could you have found a better way to make peace with Robert's part in her daughter's death?
7. Cissy has been hiding a secret from Zeke, her husband. Did you believe that he could forgive and forget? Can love overcome deception?
8. Cissy's need for love touches each of the women at the "Old Stoneburner Place" differently but deeply. Did you feel the women's gift to her at the end was appropriate and meaningful?
9. Can the gentle pleasure of creating a quilt or any handcrafted item be a healing force for the maker, the giver and the recipient?

10. Heirlooms of all kinds have the power to connect us with our past and with family members we might never have known. Do you have an heirloom in your family with its own important story?