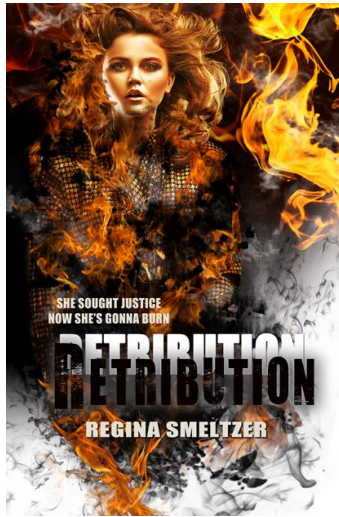


Discussion Questions



RETRIBUTION

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About the Book

Lillian Hunter's life is destroyed when she's implicated in setting the fire which killed her husband and daughter. Seeking peace and restoration, she pulls the pieces of her shattered life together and accepts a position at a college in another state. Surrounded by a loving family that has adopted her as their own, Lillian struggles with new life, new love...and new danger. Fires are being set in which she is once again implicated.

Doubting her own sanity, Lillian takes steps to ensure she isn't setting the fires. But if it isn't her, who is it? And why, after she's moved halfway across the country, have they followed her? A day of reckoning is coming as Lillian seeks to exonerate herself and claim retribution for the destruction of her life. Will she discover the truth before her new life is consumed by the flames?

TITLE: Retribution

Discussion:

Question 1: Lillian's guilt over neglecting her husband and child led her to believe she was unworthy of a second chance. Is this sound reasoning? Have you ever felt unworthy?

Answer 1: God always gives second chances to those who are truly repentant. He doesn't want anyone to live a joyless life. Satan can use our feeling of failure to his advantage.

Question 2: Trina, Ted and Bill were given spiritual gifts. How did they use these gifts for His glory?

Answer 2: Trina was gifted with hospitality, Ted with intercessory prayer, and Bill with insight. They listened when God spoke, even if they didn't understand the need. We often ignore God's voice, thinking it is our imagination or not important. We need to learn to discern His voice from the noise of life.

Question 3: What motivated Roger's revenge? Has anyone or anything ever fed the discord between you and another?

Answer 3: Roger suffered from lack of self-esteem and was naturally a follower. In childhood he lacked a moral role model. His mother-in-law used guilt to control him. Past choices allowed darkness of spirit to control his moods, and perhaps his mind. Satan uses every opportunity possible to sway us from what is right.

Question 4: Bill hesitated to declare his love for Sandra because of the deep commitment he felt for his dead wife. He questioned what would happen in Heaven if he showed up with two wives. Do you agree with Ted's answer that God had it under control?

Answer 4: God has every part of our lives in His control if we allow Him to. Biblically there are numerous examples of remarriage after the death of a spouse. Guilt should not keep us from doing what is sanctioned by God.

Question 5: Paul probably could have prevented some of Lillian's problems, but he chose to step aside and allow Roger to date her. Do you agree with Paul's decision? How is this like or dislike God's behavior towards us?

Answer 5: Paul made the wrong decision for the right reason. He chose not to interfere in a relationship he believed Lillian preferred rather than questioning her choice. This allowed Lillian free-will, but Paul remained attentive enough to intervene when disaster happened. God also gives us freedom of choice, even if we choose poorly. He, too, is there to pick us up when we fall.

Question 6: Fire is a recurring theme in the book. What are the different ways fire is used? Can you relate this to anything in your life?

Answer 6: Fire was shown as providing warmth and hominess when Ted lit the logs in the fireplace. Lillian found fire exciting as a child and almost burned her friend's house down. Later fire became the enemy, the destroyer of all she valued, both by claiming the lives of her husband and child, but also in Darlington by attempting to rob her of the new life she had started. Fire is neutral in itself. Just as money, time, or talents are harmless unless we use them in the wrong way.

Question 7: Lillian arrived in Darlington as the product of a pampered childhood and a prematurely successful career. What events changed Lillian over the course of the book?

Answer 7: Many things influenced Lillian into becoming the more humble and Christ-centered woman she became. Some of them were the friends God provided in Trina and Ted, the opportunity to see life from a different vantage-point with the homeless man and by working in the homeless shelter. Other events would be the beauty of Williamson Park, satisfaction with her job, and the warmth of the environment at the bed and breakfast. There are many more. Our lives are often most impacted by a series of small events rather than one large one.

Question 8: At the end of the book Roger regretted his decision to kill Lillian and confessed his love for her. What caused this change?

Answer 8: Roger was exposed to loving relationships based on God. He was influenced by Ted and Trina, and then by Lillian who had a deep faith even though she wavered and did not always behave in a godly way. Their actions, more than any words, drove his change.

Question 9: Roger experienced nightmares after killing the first time. Later the nightmares faded. Why was this and can you relate it to anything in your life?

Answer 9 We know right from wrong, and when we go against what we know is right, guilt follows. However, over time our minds become immune, or numb to sin. We no longer see it as sin, but just a part of life. Anything we do repeatedly can cause us to become desensitized. Watching too many violent movies, reading trashy books, surrounding ourselves with less than wholesome people all will change our perspective of right and wrong.

Question 10: Even though she prayed, Lillian was surprised when her parents shared that they were attending church. How did God use Lillian to bring her parents into the fold?

Answer 10: Lillian lived according to God's law, such as praying before meals. Her parents also witnessed the change in Lillian's values. God used the relationship she had with her minister in Cleveland as a catalyst for a visit. None of her parents' friends had called over the holidays, but the minister who did not know them cared enough to stop by.

