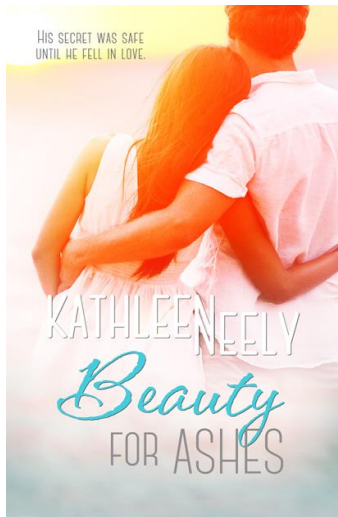


Discussion Questions



BEAUTY FOR ASHES

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ISBN (e): 9781522301967

ISBN (tp): 9781522301974

Imprint: Harbourlight Books

Publisher: Pelican Book Group

Pages: 302

eBook SRP: 5.99

Also Available in Paperback:

About the Book

Nathan Drummond's actions at the age of eighteen had devastating consequences. Writing became therapeutic, leading him into a successful career as a mystery writer. With seven novels to his name, Nathan is rapidly becoming a household name.

When family responsibilities force him to return to his home town, he meets Angie Hernandez. Nathan doesn't count on falling in love, and certainly not with a woman who has the power to shatter his peace.

Being at home pushes him too close to painful memories, and as guilt threatens and panic attacks set in, Nathan begins to write a novel paralleling the tragic event from his youthful folly.

Will the novel be seen as a work of fiction, or will it expose his secret and threaten his future?

TITLE: Beauty For Ashes

Discussion:

Question 1: Why didn't Nathan talk with his mother about his father's financial difficulties? How would this story be different if he had?

Answer 1: Nathan immediately assumed the worst. He tried to protect his mother from worry and wanted to preserve his father's reputation.

Question 2: Compare Nathan's response to the accident with Sam's response. What do you learn about each of them by their reactions?

Answer 2: Sam's reaction was self-protective. Nathan had a fuller grasp of the impact. He showed a deeper value of human life.

Question 3: Why did Nathan keep a jar of ashes? What did it accomplish?

Answer 3: He wanted a reminder of his reckless actions and he didn't want Ramon Garcia to be forgotten. In the end, Nathan learned that it accomplished very little.

Question 4: After years of avoiding all reminders of the accident, why did Nathan volunteer at The Herald Center?

Answer 4: He was drawn to the center for some unexplained reason that surpassed his desire to play basketball.

Question 5: Angie compared her decision to give up Julliard with Nathan's decision to help his mother. Was this a fair comparison? How were they the same, and how were they different?

Answer 5: Both sacrificed to help and protect someone they loved. Both kept their sacrifices in confidence. The biggest difference is that Angie gave up her dream, while Nathan was still able to pursue his.

Question 6: At one point, Nathan said that Del put him to shame. What was Nathan's reasoning?

Answer 6: Del was almost as old as Nathan had been when the accident occurred. Nathan had lived with two attentive parents and many advantages, but made some poor choices. Del grew up poor in a single parent home, but made better choices.

Question 7: Nathan's silence following the accident allowed him to avoid the legal consequences. What was the cost of his silence?

Answer 7: He suffered panic attacks and lived with fear. The guilt overwhelmed him. He allowed distance between him and his home, resulting in less time with family.

Question 8: Nathan's mother delayed her hip surgery, stating that she would know when the pain was worse than going through the surgery. How did that same concept effect Nathan's decision?

Answer 8: Living in his hometown, Nathan had constant reminders, increasing his guilt. Eventually, the pain of living with his guilty secret became more painful than facing the consequences.

Question 9: What was Elizabeth's reaction when she learned the truth? Why did her response to the judge differ?

Answer 9 Elizabeth was angry after years of bitterness. She realized that the core her father's life and ministry had been forgiveness. Her request for mercy was an act of obedience. Her Uncle Alex said that her heart would eventually catch up with her words.

Question 10: How did Nathan's arrest and imprisonment set him free?

Answer 10: Nathan had been imprisoned in his world of guilt, shame, and attempt to cover his secret. When he confessed and turned himself in, he released each of those.

