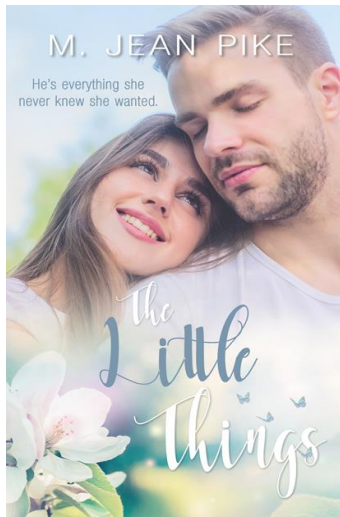


Discussion Questions



THE LITTLE THINGS

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ISBN (e):9781522303916

Imprint: White Rose Publishing

Publisher: Pelican Book Group

Pages: 244

eBook SRP: 5.99

Also Available in Paperback:

About the Book

Wanting more from life than football games and potluck suppers in her small Ohio town, Rochelle Delany boarded a bus for California a decade ago and didn't look back. But instead of a glamor life, she became trapped in a nightmare of labor trafficking. After a daring escape, she returns home and finds herself in danger of losing the only safe haven she's ever known to a man she barely remembers.

Sandy Fairbrother has a problem with trust. Twice betrayed, he now puts his faith only in God. He's a single dad, doing his best to grow his construction business and raise his young son. But haunted by an impulsive kiss Rochelle gave him fifteen years ago, her unexpected return has him rethinking things. He's been given a second chance to win her heart. And this time, he won't fail.

TITLE: The Little Things

Discussion:

Question 1: When Rochelle returns to Redford's Crossing after almost a decade away, she is disheartened to learn how broken her relationship with her brother, Austin, is. What parallels can be drawn from the parable of the prodigal son? What other factors contributed to the breakdown of Rochelle and Austin's relationship?

Answer 1: Like the brother in the parable of the prodigal son, Austin was left with the full responsibility of their foster mother's home and health. He assumed his sister was living a glamorous, carefree life and this led to a lot of resentment on his part. On a deeper level, his feelings of pain and abandonment caused him to push away the person he loved most.

Question 2: In what ways did Bessie's example of quiet faith impact Rochelle's life?

Answer 2: Rochelle well remembers Bessie's belief that God would provide and how he always did. Bessie's sacrificial love in taking Rochelle and Austin in as children despite her own health problems, taught Rochelle the meaning of mother-love. The memory of Bessie's "little things," the small, simple pleasures she created for her foster children are deeply ingrained in Rochelle and she tries to create "little things" for Jace. She learned to believe in the power of prayer from a lifetime of watching Bessie's prayers answered, along with the ones she didn't witness; the prayers that kept her safe and eventually guided her back home.

Question 3: At the reading of the will, when Rochelle learns that Bessie left the house to Sandy, she thinks it is the worst thing that could have happened. In what ways did Bessie's choice turn out to be a blessing in disguise?

Answer 3: Rochelle saw the house as her safety net. She planned to buy Austin's half and begin her new life once she was safely installed in the house. But God had other plans! In the end, she learned to trust Sandy as well as God's plan and ended up starting a completely different kind of new life than she had envisioned, one that was much better, and the house became a blessing to battered women as a shelter.

Question 4: How does Sandy's status as a single dad both hinder and advance his decision to pursue a relationship with Rochelle?

Answer 4: At first Sandy is reluctant to let Rochelle know of his love for her, and is concerned that Jace is growing too attached to her. He was disillusioned love both as a teenager and as a young married man. He is afraid that he might be hurt again, and even more so, that Jace will be hurt. After spending time with Rochelle, he sees her genuine affection for his son and is convinced she would make their family complete as a step-mother for Jace and a partner for himself.

Question 5: When Rochelle's would-be kidnapper tries to abduct her, God steps in in a most unusual way. In what other ways is God's hand at work in the story of Rochelle and Sandy?

Answer 5: Sometimes prayers are answered with “wait”. But other times God answers so immediately that there is no doubt it could be anything but his hand at work. The foiled kidnapping is one of those times. A more subtle “coincidence” is Sandy’s decision to hire Bessie as a tutor for Jace. This led to him becoming her prayer partner and ultimately being willed her house.

Question 6: Rochelle’s first encounter with Sandy when she returns to Redford’s Crossing is rather disastrous. What are the internal and external causes of the conflict between them?

Answer 6: Sandy wants to buy the house and this makes Rochelle feel threatened. She has placed all of her hopes on the house as a safe haven and is both fearful and hostile that Sandy might take that refuge from her. Sandy is floored by Rochelle’s reaction. He feels she is being selfish in wanting to keep a home she hasn’t seemed to care about in years. Though he secretly adored her as a teenager, she was indifferent to him. Now he feels disregarded for a second time.

Question 7: A favorite scripture verse contains the promise that all things work together for good for those who love God. (Romans 8:28) How did Rochelle’s horrible experiences in California work into something good?

Answer 7: Rochelle was ashamed of the choices she had made and avoided talking about her years in California. In the end, those experiences gave her the compassion and the will to help other women in abusive situations. She had to first experience being alone and afraid to fully appreciate being safe and loved

Question 8: How does Rochelle grow, change or evolve throughout the story? What events trigger the change?

Answer 8: After being abandoned by her parents, Ro grew up believing she had to be perfect to be loved and believed fame and money would equal happiness. She returns home broken and afraid, trusting no one. At the altar one Sunday night, she recommits her life to God and begins to see that people are worth more than riches and that her small town contains treasures she had not noticed before. She begins to trust that she is loved unconditionally by both Sandy and her heavenly Father and in return finds that she possesses that kind of love within herself. The kind of love that is willing to sacrifice her own life for a little boy’s.

Question 9: How does the story come full circle? What are the similarities and the differences from the beginning to the end?

Answer 9 The story begins with Rochelle seeking to start a new life. The venture fills her with fear and uncertainty. The end of the story shows she and Sandy living their new life together. Their love has created another new life, which they anticipate with joy!

Question 10: What is the key take away from the story?

Answer 10: No matter how far you stray from your heavenly Father, you can always return home to him. He will restore what was lost, and sometimes, he will give you things you did not even know you wanted!

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