



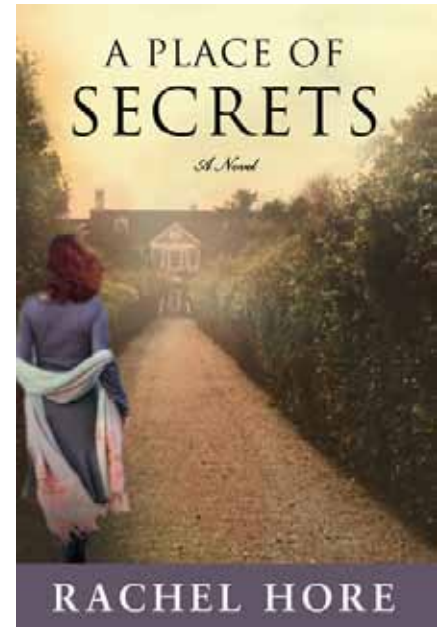
Reading Group Gold

A Place of Secrets

Rachel Hore

Discussion Questions

1. Jude, Claire, Summer, Gran, and Esther all seem to exhibit unique strength, yet possess their own frailties. How do they overcome their weaknesses? Do you think that these traits get passed down through generations?
2. Jude has been tormented by her dreams of running through the woods since she was a child. Now her niece Summer is having the same nightmares. What is the role of dreams within the narrative? Are dreams merely derivatives of our imagination, or are they discernible windows into our daily lives?
3. The distinct settings in the novel add to the mood and plot of the story. Describe the different settings (ie. the city, Norfolk, the woods, the folly) and their role in respect to the characters. How do Jude's priorities change depending on her location?
4. The two men in Jude's life—Caspar and Euan—seem to be complete opposites. What do you think accounts for Jude's change of heart when she decides to stop seeing Caspar? Why is she so drawn to Euan?
5. Describe Jude's relationship with her sister, Claire. There seems to be some resentment between the two, yet it is clear that they still have a strong bond. Are we irrevocably tied by blood?
6. Gran says, "Things aren't easy to forget. Yet we must put them behind us and make the best of life." Do you agree with what Gran says? Is it best to forget about our secrets, or do we need to face them in order to move on?
7. Jude has an immediate connection to Chantal when she meets her at the Wickham estate. What brings these two women with vastly different backgrounds together? How would you explain the power of shared experiences in creating intimate bonds?
8. Chantal mentions that it was fate that brought Jude to Starborough, but Jude believes that things in life aren't dictated by destiny, but are "chaotic, random." How much of a role does fate play in the events of the story?
9. How effective is the story in travelling between the eighteenth century and the present? Do you think that this is done successfully through Esther's letters?



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10. Jude is accused several times of putting her late husband, Mark, on a pedestal after his death, yet she later has suspicions of his fidelity during their marriage. What accounts for this shift in view? Is Jude finally able to move on after realizing that her husband may not have been “perfect?” Do you believe that there is one soul mate for each person, or is it possible to have a second chance at true love?

11. What is the significance of the star necklace that gets passed down through generations? What does the journey symbolize and what does it mean when the missing diamond is found? Do you think the necklace ends up in the right hands?