

Reader's Guide

1. Jake and Venus finally appear content in their life and marriage, yet there is an underlying fear that the past will come back to haunt them. Do you believe in the current movement; *what you fear the most is what you will most likely attract*? Is it Venus and Jake's insecurity that draws trouble to their door?
2. When Legend shows up, Venus senses danger but has no real proof. She tries to warn Jake about his friend. How should couples resolve their disapproval of a friend or family member? When is it okay to interfere? Is it possible to interfere without appearing selfish?
3. Delma Hawkins has a huge favor to ask of Venus, putting her in the center of Delma and Trevelle's endless feud. Was there any way Venus could have helped mend their relationship?
4. Delma and Trevelle despise each other, yet they are more alike than each will admit, starting with their fierce love for their daughter, Keisha. What is at the heart of their hatred for each other? If one acknowledged the other's pain or hurt would that resolve their conflict?
5. Three women are at the center of this story; one of them speaks from what they hope will not be their resting place, vowing to exact revenge on the person who kidnapped them. Is there any point when you know which one is taken, or does your guess keep changing? Who was your first guess?
6. Three men are also at the center of this story. One of them is responsible for a desperate act against a woman. His reasoning is that of *love*. Is a crime of passion any more acceptable than a crime of greed? Is society responsible for romanticizing possessiveness thereby giving permission for reckless behavior?
7. Jake is put in a situation that makes him choose his wife over his own life. He's proven his devotion to Venus over and over again. Is there ever a point in a relationship when you can rest on your laurels? Does it have to be a constant work in progress for it to last?
8. Trevelle meets a new man who meets none of her standards. Or at least none of the criteria she's imagined in her mind. Do we put up barriers to meeting someone who might be perfect for us based on invisible criteria?