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EXPERT WITNESS

It's two in the morning when Hannah Sheraton slips into Archer's Hermosa Beach apartment to see if Josie Bates sleeps in his bed. But Josie isn't there. In fact, Josie isn't anywhere. When her Jeep is found abandoned in a parking lot near the Redondo pier, the only clue to her whereabouts leads Archer to Daniel Young, an expert witness for the prosecution in the case that made Josie's reputation as a defense attorney ten years earlier. Fighting to keep Hannah from being taken into custody by child protective services, racing against a clock ticking off the minutes of Josie's life, Archer reluctantly partners with Daniel Young and a rogue Hermosa Beach detective, Liz Driscoll, to race down a winding road of intrigue. From the Hollywood Hills to the glitzy evangelical enclave of Orange County, the seedy side of Los Angeles to the pristine and remote California mountains, Archer bores into the past. What he finds is that the woman he loves was once a ruthless and hated defense attorney, that the system he believes in has released a double murderer, and that there is more than one person who would be happy if Josie Bates was never seen again.

1. Hannah is terrified when Josie disappears.

Is her concern for Josie's well-being or is it driven primarily by her own fear abandonment? Can Hannah separate the two any longer?

2. The concept of teamwork is pivotal in this book. Hannah and Archer, Archer and Liz, Josie and Erika comprised teams. Which ones were effective? What were the motivations for each character to put their trust in the other – or to withhold it? How did those motivations change as the story progressed? Can the individual ever be subordinate to the team?

3. Hannah and Archer's relationship changes in the course of this book.

Where is the true turning point in their relationship? Was Archer acting out of respect for what he knew Josie would want or was he trying to be a better man when he acted in Hannah's best interests?

4. Liz Driscoll is a lonely but good intentioned woman.

Initially, she went out on a limb to impress Archer but her motivation changed. Did she want to prove something to herself, her boss, or was she just caught up in the challenge of this case? Was she ever motivated by the plight of the victims?

5. When Liz dies, she is honored with a formal funeral.

Would she have been happy or thought it a ridiculous exercise?

6. The job of an attorney is to discredit witnesses against her client.

Should a lawyer ever consider the consequences of his or her professional behavior? Think of what Josie did to the reputations of Daniel Young, Isaiah Wilson, his daughter Janey, and Peter Siddon. Where did she cross the line? Was Xavier worth saving?