

Book Club Discussions



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FORGOTTEN WITNESS

Appearing before the Senate Select Committee on Eastern European crime, Josie Bates testifies passionately about the brutal Albanian blood feud that has sent Hannah into hiding with Billy Zuni and Archer on a quest to find them. While Senator Patriota, the man sure to be the next president of the United States, promises his patronage Josie isn't convinced he was even listening – but someone was. Charging through the crush of bodies, evading security, a frantic man launches himself at Josie. Toppling her to the ground, he pushes something into her hands, puts his lips against her ear and whispers five words that will send her from the icy winter of Washington, D.C. to the tropical warmth of Hawaii in search of Hannah. What Josie finds is a horrific, long buried truth that will change her life forever - if she stays alive long enough to live it.

BOOK CLUB GUIDE:

1. **The Witness Series follows the characters' lives rather than a series format of courtroom drama.** Were you disappointed or intrigued by this approach? Do you prefer a series to always have a predictable format within which the characters grow but that growth is not central to the plot?
2. **Emotional response versus objectivity is theme of Forgotten Witness.** Josie is forced to confront multiple emotions - anger, love, responsibility, loyalty - toward both her mother and her father. Do you think her responses were reasonable or would you have expected the lawyer in her to subdue the emotional responses?
3. **Archer is offstage and yet he plays a huge role in this book.** Should have gone to Josie's side and abandon his search for Hannah? Would overriding her objections have damaged or deepened their relationship.
4. **Hannah does not appear in Forgotten Witness.** Were you disappointed? Was it understandable that Josie's attention was focused on her mother? Was this a function of necessity as the story escalated or was this response a matter of blood is thicker than water? Were you able to set Hannah aside as the story unfolded?
5. **Ian Francis is critical to Forgotten Witness on many levels.** Did you feel his presence even after his death? Did you believe him to be a complex man and a hero? Is it plausible that love can overcome what he and Emily went through? That somehow each of them would remember one another when they could remember nothing else - not even their own children?
6. **Stephen Kyle is a giving, loving man who is larger than life.** Did you feel that he was falling in love with Josie? Stephen gives so much to those around him, but is he happy?
7. **In the end, Josie sends Emily back to Hawaii with Amelia.** Was the ending satisfying? Should she have made another choice? In the end, did Josie love Emily? Could she love Emily if there was no history as a mother/daughter? Did finding Emily allow Josie to finally put the sad and frightened girl she was to rest?

8. **The government is the real villain in *Forgotten Witness*.** *Forgotten Witness* was inspired by real events. Is there any justification for programs like MKUltra? Is the government an entity in and of itself or can individuals control what is done in the name of government? Is it possible that Ambrose Patriota honestly believed what he did to Emily was for the greater good?