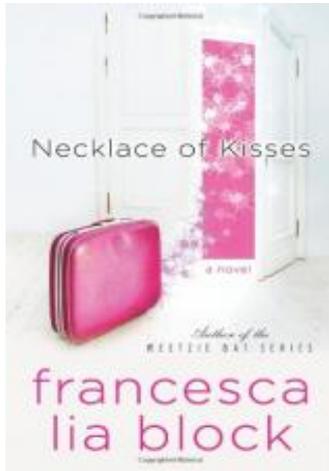


Necklace of Kisses

by Francesca Lia Block



About the Book

Where were the kisses? Weetzie Bat wondered. And so begins a magical journey of discovery. As she turns forty and the relationship with her secret-agent lover-man Max falls apart, Weetzie packs up her lime green and bright orange bikini, orange suede sneakers, and Pucci tunic, jumps in her '65 mint green Thunderbird, and leaves.

Weetzie finds herself at the enchanted pink hotel in sparkling Los Angeles, where she once shied away from a kiss that may have led her to the love of her life. Now she returns, perhaps in search of her lost passion, and meets an otherworldly cast of characters, among them a blue-skinned receptionist, an invisible cleaning lady, a seductive fawn, and a sushi-eating mermaid who gives her a kiss that sets the wheel of self-discovery in motion.

Block invests every scene with equal shots of magic and realism, rendering her heroine and supporting players in vivid, poetic detail. In **Necklace of Kisses** the fans that have grown up with Weetzie Bat will be able to meet her in adulthood and find that life is still no less trying and no less full of wonder.

Discussion Guide

1. Throughout her journey, Weetzie meets a wide variety of interesting characters such as the blue receptionist and the invisible cleaning lady. Why do you think Block includes these magical characters? How does each character's quirk symbolize their life?
2. After each kiss, Weetzie finds she has been given a jewel for her necklace. What does each jewel symbolize? How are these gifts meant to help her reconnect to her husband and life?
3. For many fans of Francesca Lia Block, Weetzie was a major part of their adolescent lives. Is the adult Weetzie any different than the Weetzie of Block's previous books? Are the changes realistic? How have her past experiences shaped

the woman she's become?

4. Almost everyone has a man or woman in their past that they will never forget and provokes them to ask what could have been. For Weetzie that person was Zane Starling. Do you have a "Zane Starling" in your past?

5. As with all mother/daughter relationships, Weetzie and her two daughters often find themselves in conflict. Weetzie is not an ordinary mom. How do her two daughters react to Weetzie's eccentric qualities? Why do you think their first reactions to Weetzie's leaving are hostile?

6. Block writes, "And what did Witch Baby want?" All three women seem to be looking for something? How are their searches similar? Can you see Weetzie's influence in her daughters' lives?

7. The events of September 11th have profoundly affected Max and in turn have affected Weetzie and Max's marriage. How do Max and Weetzie deal with their grief? Has September 11th affected your relationships in similar ways?

8. Block writes, "Only people who find their true families can survive." What do you think is Block's definition of family? How has Vixanne Wigg's separation from Witch Baby affected her life?

9. Weetzie's journey in **Necklace of Kisses** could be seen as a type of fable, with the various magical characters and symbolism. But what really defines a fable is the life lesson learned from it. What would you say is the lesson the reader can learn from Weetzie and her experiences?

Author Bio

Author Francesca Lia Block is renowned for her groundbreaking novels and stories --- postmodern, magic-realist tales that transport readers through the harsh, gritty landscapes of contemporary life to transcendent realms of the senses where love is always our saving grace.

Born in Los Angeles, where she still lives, Block's work pulsates with the language and images of the city's sprawling subculture. Lauds a reviewer for the *New York Times* Book Review, "Block writes about the real Los Angeles better than anyone since Raymond Chandler."

Block has described her work as "contemporary fairy tales with an edge," where the real world and its trouble find solace through the magic of creative expression and love. She has received numerous honors, including the Margaret A. Edwards Lifetime Achievement Award and the Phoenix Award, as well as citations from the American Library Association, the *New York Times* Book Review and the *School Library Journal*. Her work has been published around the world, translated into many languages.

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