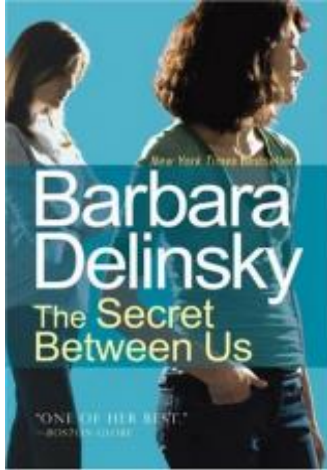


# The Secret Between Us

by Barbara Delinsky

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## About the Book

Nothing will break this mother-daughter bond. Not even the truth.

Deborah Monroe and her daughter, Grace, are driving home from a party when their car hits a man running in the dark. Grace was at the wheel, but Deborah sends her home before the police arrive, determined to shoulder the blame for the accident. Her decision then turns into a deception that takes on a life of its own and threatens the special bond between mother and daughter.

**The Secret Between Us** is an unforgettable story about making bad choices for the right reasons and the terrible consequences of a lie gone wrong. Once again, Barbara Delinsky has delivered a riveting study of family and a superbly crafted novel, perfectly targeted to reading groups and fans of provocative fiction.

## Discussion Guide

1. What did the scenes depicting the accident reveal about the family dynamics between Deborah and Grace? How would you or your parents have reacted in a similar situation?
2. How does Deborah reconcile her role as a mother with her role as a daughter? What aspects of her upbringing does she try to avoid repeating? How did your perception of her family shift throughout the novel?
3. Do Jill and Deborah remember their mother the same way? How is their family affected by her absence? What accounts for the distinctions between Jill's and Deborah's paths in life?

4. Discuss the power and lack of power created by the many secrets woven throughout the novel. Which deceptions (including self-deceptions) harm the characters the most? Which deceptions are unavoidable?
5. Compare Grace and Dylan. How do they cope with their vulnerabilities? Do they respond to their parents' divorce in essentially the same way, or are their temperaments distinct?
6. Why was Calvin so secretive during his lifetime? What do his brother's observations about their childhood tell us about Calvin's outlook on life? How did your initial theories compare to the truth of Calvin's death?
7. Why was it difficult for Karen to realize the truth about Hal's infidelity? What sustains marriages such as theirs?
8. In what way do Deborah and her father view their role as physicians differently? How do they define the keys to healing?
9. What does it take for Deborah to trust Tom? How might their relationship have unfolded without the tension of a possible lawsuit on the part of Calvin's widow? In Tom's case, did the law help or hinder his quest for the truth?
10. Is Grace's wish to take responsibility for the accident related to her feelings about her parents' divorce? Or is she simply an honest young woman who wants to do the right thing? Does Greg respond appropriately to her self-destructive behavior?
11. What was Greg looking for when he married Rebecca? How was his perception of himself and his family transformed in the novel's closing chapters?
12. Why does Grace give Danielle the cold shoulder when she so badly needs someone to talk to? What do their fathers have in common?
13. What is it like to live in a close-knit community such as Leyland? On what basis do the residents judge one another? Who determines who the power brokers will be? How would Deborah and Grace's situation have changed if the accident had taken place in a large city?
14. In the end, was justice served by John's decision? What was his share of the responsibility in perpetuating the secret?
15. What makes the rain an appropriate sign for representing transformations, both when Deborah is with Tom and in the final images of Grace?
16. In what way does **The Secret Between Us** underscore dilemmas of truth and dishonesty explored in Barbara Delinsky's previous works? What distinguishes this novel from the other Delinsky fiction you have read?
17. What is the most significant secret you have ever tried to keep? What led you to reveal the truth?

## Author Bio

Barbara Delinsky is the author of more than 20 *New York Times* bestselling books, including **BEFORE AND AGAIN**,

THE SCENT OF JASMINE and LOVE SONGS. She has been published in 28 languages worldwide. A lifelong New Englander, Delinsky earned a B.A. in psychology at Tufts University and an M.A. in sociology at Boston College. She lives in Massachusetts with her husband, more books than she'll ever be able to read, two tennis racquets, and enough electronic devices to keep in close touch with her children and their families.

## Critical Praise

"Relationships are brought to the limit in Delinsky's splendid latest exploration of family dynamics.... [**The Secret Between Us**] combines her understanding of human nature with absorbing, unpredictable storytelling --- a winning combination."

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### **The Secret Between Us**

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