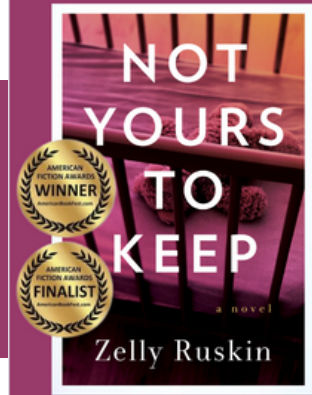


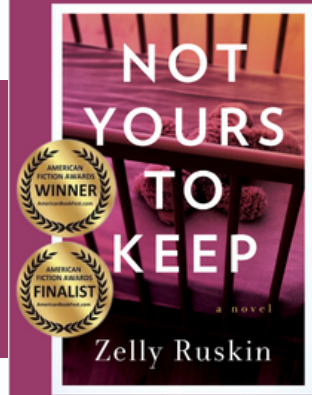
# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



- 1** Not Yours to Keep revolves around choices mothers made as young women. How do these choices impact the characters' lives and the central storyline? How has your life been affected by a decision your mother or grandmother made?
- 2** The novel is told from each character's point of view. How, if at all, did that deepen the story? How might the book be different if the narration was told from only from one point of view? Whose would you choose?
- 3** Not Yours to Keep features Billie and Anne, two complex female characters, who face moral dilemmas and make questionable choices. How are the woman alike? How are they different? Can you sympathize with them both? Did your opinion of the characters change over the course of the book? If so, how?
- 4** What does Tyler's narrative add to your understanding of him as an individual and in his relationships with both Billie and Anne?
- 5** How do secrets and lies contribute to the tension in the story? Do relationships/marriage require total honesty? Is keeping secrets in the service of protecting those we love admirable or deceptive?
- 6** Jealousy can have a profound impact on relationships, and drive certain characters to extreme actions. How does Anne's jealousy towards Tyler's wife play a significant role in the plot? What are the consequences?
- 7** Billie fantasizes about adopting her client's baby and struggles with societal expectations regarding motherhood. How do these expectations influence the characters' choices? How do you think society views motherhood and what kind of burden does that place on women?

CONTINUED 

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



- 8** What defines motherhood? Should every woman be a mother? There are many different mother-daughter relationships depicted in the novel. Which ones did you find most compelling?
- 9** Discuss the portrayal of adoption in the novel. How does it affect the birth mother, adoptive parents, and the child? Did your perception/knowledge of adoption change while reading?
- 10** How do the characters in the story reflect or challenge your views on the nature versus nurture debate? Do you think genetics or environmental influences have a stronger impact on shaping one's personality and behavior?
- 11** "Strength, courage, heart," is Billie's mantra. How does it apply to each of the characters? To adoption?
- 12** On page 200, Billie and Gianna have what is likely their last conversation. What do you imagine happens to Gianna after the story ends?
- 13** Who did you think was the father of Anne's baby? Did the truth surprise you?
- 14** How did you feel at the end of the story? What message did you take away from reading it? Has this story changed your perception of what it means to be a family?
- 15** How relevant or relatable are the themes or messages of the book to your own life or to society today?