



## MY SISTER'S PRAYER

*By Mindy Starns Clark and Leslie Gould*

1. Maddee knows that Nicole needed to fix what was damaged on the inside to begin healing on the outside and recover from her addiction. What in the story contributes to Nicole's healing? What do you think her chances of staying in recovery are?
2. Maddee has a difficult time getting past thinking of herself as an ugly duckling. Do you have a negative impression of yourself from your childhood that you have carried with you? If so, how have you dealt with it?
3. Nicole recognizes that Maddee's perfectionist tendencies are an effort to control everything around her and asks her when she's going to grow up and realize that life is "ugly and messy and difficult, that it doesn't tie up in a neat little package with a perfect little bow?" Was there a point in your life when you realized it would never be tied with a perfect little bow? How did you handle it? What advice do you have for someone who is a perfectionist?
4. Celeste leaves a good family to chase after a man and ends up halfway across the world. Have you (or someone you've known) made rash decisions in the heat of the moment that changed the course of your life? How did it turn out? What advice would you give someone contemplating such an act?
5. Lying comes easily to both Berta and Nicole. Maddee's supervisor reminds her that lying can become habitual but can be corrected through therapy. Do you think Berta and Nicole lie for the same or different reasons? Why? Do you believe this habit can be corrected?
6. How did Nicole's age and personality contribute to the long-term emotional impact of the murder scene the girls stumbled upon? Did you feel it was believable that her nightmares created an even deeper emotional wound?
7. At Mr. Edwards's inn, Celeste was forced to work harder than she ever had in her entire life. What prepared her, in her past, for the difficult labor of a kitchen maid and serving girl?
8. Celeste finds, for a good part of the story, that she cannot pray. Have you ever have had a time in your life when you found it difficult to pray? What got you through? What made you able to pray again?
9. Sary tells Celeste that the charming men are "the ones you need to watch out for." Jonathan and Dr. Austin Hill are the most charming men in the story. Even though they are separated by more than three hundred years, how are they similar? How are they different?
10. Are there stories about your ancestors you've learned from? If so, what are they and what did you learn?