

# the unrepentant Siren

## Book Club Conversation Guide

1. At the start of the novel, Sara is faced with a medical emergency involving her best friend, Leila. She keeps her composure and saves Leila's life. How do you think you would react in a similar life or death situation?
2. Leila has spent her entire adult life running from one man to another as a reaction to being abandoned by her father during her teens. Have you ever experienced abandonment by a significant person in your life? How did you cope? Does Leila and her self-destructive coping mechanism remind you of anyone you have known?
3. Leila surprises Sara with her sudden engagement to Alex. Although Sara sees this as a healthy change to her friend's normal pattern, it still worries her that the couple doesn't really know one another. If a good friend of yours did a complete 180 in his or her life, what would you do?
4. After Sara saves Leila's life, they develop a telepathic connection. Is there anyone in your life who you seem to always be on the same wavelength with? Why do you think you share this extra sensitivity with him or her?
5. Sara's psychic abilities reemerge during the trip to Charleston. Have you ever stayed in a house or hotel that you thought was haunted? If yes, what occurred? Were you the only person to experience the event/sensation?
6. Alex revealed to Sara and Leila that his sister, Charlotte, died when she was a girl. He explained that his parents reacted to their grief in very different ways, ultimately divorcing. Have you ever lost someone very close to you? Did you notice any difference in the way you grieved versus others close to the same person? How do you think this would be magnified in the case of a child?
7. Maxim's relationship with Leila goes from friendly, to seductively inappropriate, to oddly cool. Leila senses that there is more to him than meets the eye, but dismisses it until it is too late. Have you ever picked up strange vibes from a person you met? What did you do? Were your suspicions ever confirmed about his or her character/sanity/motives?
8. Sara is told about Ralston's tawdry past as a Congressman from Leila's brother, Royce. She later discovers that this particular political scandal was only the tip of the iceberg regarding Ralston's betrayal of his wife and family. Sadly, this seems to happen at a rather frequent rate in politics. Why do you think this is the case? What other professions seem to attract this kind of behavior?
9. Charlotte/Charlie's parents couldn't accept her sexual orientation, preferring a psychiatric diagnosis over the label of lesbian. They believed she could be "fixed," suggesting sexual orientation is a choice. Do you think it is a choice or an immutable result of genetic/hormonal/intrauterine influences? What would you do and feel if your child revealed he or she were a homosexual? Do you know of any "coming out" situations with family or friends that went positively/negatively?
10. When Leila is faced with being abducted at sea, she makes a desperate attempt to flee. What do you think you would do if faced with a potential abduction? How would you react if someone you loved disappeared without a trace?
11. In spite of anticipating incredible resistance, Sara is compelled to convince Alex that Leila is still alive. The hardest part is implicating his family in the twisted plot. She does not falter because she knows in her gut that she is absolutely right. Have you ever felt so strongly about something that you were willing to "go to battle," even if it was going to be in vain? If so, what was the outcome?
12. Without a doubt, Leila married into the family from hell. Constance, Ralston, and Maxim made her own family look practically functional. The kidnapping experience helped her recognize her own unwillingness to see her father as a flawed human being. In the epilogue, she confides in Sara that she is ready to forgive him and attempt reconciliation. Have you ever been estranged from someone? If so, did you ever attempt reconciling, and what was the result?
13. The epilogue unveils a more mature Leila. What do you think contributed to the change? Do you think Faith forced her to grow up?
14. At the end of the book, Sara thinks, "The planets align and you get exactly what you deserve... and usually what you need." What do you think she meant by this? Do you agree?