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Never Knowing by Chevy Stevens

Discussion questions used at SPL January 10 & 11, 2017

Discussion Questions courtesy of the publisher.

1. *Never Knowing* is a novel about discovering who you are, where you come from, and what influences have shaped you. Sara worries that she inherited her anger management problems from her biological father and that her daughter may be affected as well. This fear implicitly raises the question of nature vs. nurture. Which do you think exercises the greater influence over an individual's behavior? Or is it a combination of both? Or something else entirely?
2. This novel deals with the issue of adoption rights, specifically the right of the birth parents to anonymity vs. the right—and occasionally the need—of the adopted children to the knowledge of who they have come from and how. Do you have any thoughts on how those frequently competing interests can be balanced?
3. If you were Sara Gallagher, would you want to find out who your birth parents were? Do you think this question would change for her if she'd had a happier upbringing?
4. When confronted with her birth mother's reaction, Sara does not give up. Would you have given up? How would you feel in her shoes?
5. Do you believe in pure evil? Do you believe Sara's father is evil or is there a sense of humanity in him? Why or why not?
6. Describe the dynamics of the three sisters. Did anything feel familiar to you? Do you believe one sister was more damaging than the other? Why or why not?
7. Even though the police use Sara as bait to lure her father, do you think there was something else at play, perhaps, in the dynamics between Sara and John?
8. Do you believe the police always act in the best interest of justice? In this case, when did you suspect that something might be amiss?
9. Do you agree or disagree with Shakespeare's famous statement: "What is past is prologue"?
10. Under what circumstances could you take someone's life? Under what circumstances is it ever justified?
11. Were there plot twists in this book you did not see coming? What surprised you the most?

12. In the end, who lost the most from these events? Who gained the most? Who will be able to move on? Who will not?

SPL questions:

1. Do you think the police were more concerned about catching the Campsite Serial Killer than protecting Sara? Have you ever felt that your trust was broken by someone who you placed your safety in their hands?
2. Why do you think that her adopted father treated her the way he did? Why do you think her biological father felt the need to connect with her when the man who raised her “ignored her”?
3. Do you understand the need for adoptive kids to find their biological parents? Do you think Sara would have the same need to search for her birth parents if her adopted father could have shown her more affection and kindness? Her mother did but not her father.
4. Sara is carrying a lot of guilt over the death of Danielle; do you think she is responsible because she lied to John? Is this a reasonable reaction to the situation?
5. What would have you done when Billy gave Sara the option to walk away, cut John off or stay in it to find him? Why? Sara felt she was already in “it” what do you think? Could she have walked away and tried to regain some normalcy.

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General discussion questions

- For the person who chose the book – What made you want to read it? What made you pick it for the book club? Did it live up to your expectations?
- How is the book structured? First person? Third person? Flashbacks? Narrative devices? Do you think the author did a good job with it?
- How would you describe the author’s writing style? Concise? Flowery? How is language used in this book? Read aloud a passage that really struck you. How does that passage relate to the book as a whole?
- How effective is the author’s use of plot twists? Were you able to predict certain things before they happened? Did the author keep you guessing until the end?
- Did the book hold your interest?
- How important is the setting to the story? Did you feel like you were somewhere else? Did the time setting make a difference in the story? Did the author provide enough background information for you to understand the setting and time placement?
- Which is stronger in the book – the characters or the plots?
- Would you recommend this book to someone else? Why? And to whom?

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Title: Lit Resources

Discussion questions taken from a website: LitLovers.com

website address: <http://www.litlovers.com/reading-guides/13-fiction/8810-never-knowing-stevens?start=1>

Author Bio

- Born—1973
- Where—Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada
- Education—N/A
- Awards—International Thriller Writers Award
- Currently—lives on Vancouver Island, B.E.

Chevy Stevens grew up on a ranch on Vancouver Island and still calls the island home. For most of her adult life she worked in sales, first as a rep for a giftware company and then as a Realtor.

At open houses, waiting between potential buyers, she spent hours scaring herself with thoughts of horrible things that could happen to her. Her most terrifying scenario, which began with being abducted, was the inspiration for *Still Missing*. After six months Chevy sold her house and left real estate so she could finish the book.

Chevy enjoys writing thrillers that allow her to blend her interest in family dynamics with her love of the west coast lifestyle. When she's not working on her next book, she's hiking with her husband and dog in the local mountains. (From the author's website.)