



THE
WIDOW *of*
SAUNDERS
CREEK

A NOVEL

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P R E S S

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READERS GUIDE

1. Corrie has spent the last decade as an army wife, moving from base to base, and hasn't been able to put down roots, but she no longer belongs in Dallas either. She moves to Saunders Creek hoping to find a place that feels like home, but Jarrod's family doesn't believe that the family house—the “home place”—is truly hers. Do you think she will find what she is looking for? How does her idea of home change throughout the story?
2. Eli loved his cousin, but they always had a rivalry. Which do you think he felt more strongly? How does this affect his choices in the book?
3. Most people in Saunders Creek see Jarrod as a hero, but Corrie wrestles with blaming Jarrod for his own death, which she sees as needlessly reckless. What do you think? How do you see the theme of sacrifice playing out in the story?
4. Corrie gave up painting when she married Jarrod. Do you think this was a good decision? Have you ever made a big sacrifice for someone you loved? How did it affect your relationship?
5. Eli explains to Corrie that a lot of people in the area practice the “old magic,” and Eli says his family has been filled with healers and naturalists for generations. This plays out in many different ways, from Sam's herbs and health food to Aunt Trudy's witchcraft to Tonia Lancaster's role as a medium. What do you think of the differences between these approaches? Where do you draw the line?

6. Strange occurrences happen at Corrie's house, some innocuous—like the spilled coffee and slamming doors—and some more menacing. Have you ever had an encounter you could not explain? What happened? What do you think it was?
7. At the beginning of the book, Corrie suspects Jarrod's ghost is haunting the home place. Rational Lola doesn't believe in supernatural events, at least at first. Aunt Trudy thinks it's Jarrod's spirit and it can be conjured, while Eli believes the presence is a demon. What do you think? What does the Bible say about ghosts? About spirits? Do you believe spirits are still active in the world today?
8. "Just be careful. It's seductive. It's also easy to justify it and make it much less dangerous in your mind and heart than it is," Eli says to warn Corrie away from Aunt Trudy's witchcraft. It is a warning that could apply to many situations. Have you ever been in a position where these words were relevant? What did you do?
9. "God's grace is all over situations like the one you are in," Eli tells Corrie. "But given the choice, He would much rather you turn to Him for comfort than anything else." What does Corrie rely on for comfort in this book? What do you tend to turn to for comfort in trying times? Is it necessarily a bad thing? How do you know when something good becomes a replacement for God?
10. What is the significance of the verses from the twenty-third Psalm that open each part of the book? Why do you think the author chose those verses? How do you see them relating to the story?
11. Eli tells Corrie, "Prayer might not change the immediate situation, but it changes the way I feel about it." Do you agree with his statement? Can you think of a time you've found this to be true?