

A woman's legs are visible from the knees down, wearing bright pink rubber boots. She is standing in a field of dense, vibrant green ivy. The top of the image shows a purple patterned skirt and a blue sky with white clouds. The overall scene is bright and colorful.

Tamara
Leigh

Nowhere
Carolina

a novel

Readers Guide

1. In high school, Maggie was a stereotypical popular girl—“self-centered, superior, and more concerned with hair and makeup than the state of the world.” What are your experiences with this type? Do you believe the stereotype is justified? *Why or why not?*
2. The painful irony of Maggie’s adult life is that her daughter is an outcast like those Maggie looked down on throughout high school. Thus, her proud behavior haunts her. What in your teenage past has haunted you?
3. Skippy has every reason to dislike Maggie, but she heaps grace on the young woman and offers encouragement on her journey toward salvation. Has anyone heaped grace on you? Do you feel you deserved it? Have you ever heaped grace on another person?
4. When Devyn asks if Reece is her father, Maggie’s quest to discover who fathered her daughter begins with a lie. As with so many lies, it backs Maggie into a corner out of which she can escape only by coming clean. However, Maggie chooses instead to add to her lie, with dire results. When has a lie backed you into a corner? *What choice(s) did you make?*
5. Reece lost a church commission when he was open about his recovery from alcohol dependence. Have you ever been

- penalized for being honest about your struggles? What did you need that you were denied?
6. We are called to forgive, even if a person doesn't acknowledge an offense. Though Yule is outwardly accepting of Maggie, it isn't until Maggie asks for forgiveness that Yule is able to truly forgive her. Why is it so hard to forgive a person who doesn't seem repentant? How does forgiveness benefit the forgiver?
 7. When Maggie finally owns up to her DNA quest, Reece is angered by her deception and initially is unwilling to offer forgiveness. When have you struggled to forgive another person? Were you able to overcome your struggle? If so, what steps did you take to extend forgiveness?
 8. Maggie's relationship with her mother is strained by past offenses. Thus, they miss out on the blessings of a loving mother-daughter relationship. How strong is your relationship with your mother? Are there issues you need to address to receive the blessings that Maggie and her mother begin to enjoy once they pack away the past?
 9. Maggie corrects her thoughts and behavior with a reminder to "be Skippy." However, she finally realizes she needs to be herself—the Maggie who kept her baby, was saved, and made a good life for herself and her daughter. A mentor who sets a godly example is a blessing, but as we grow as Christians, we need to move toward reliance on our own faith. Do you agree?

10. Uncle Obe's early onset dementia first appeared in Piper's story, *Leaving Carolina*. His deterioration continues in Maggie's story. How close have you come to someone with dementia? A parent? spouse? relative? friend? How has this heartbreaking disease affected you?