

MORSELS FOR THE MIND BOOK GROUP

Date: July 22, 2019

Hostess: Nancy Dausman

Book Title: The Almost Sisters

Author: Joshilyn Jackson

Book Synopsis: Leia Birch finds herself pregnant after a one-night stand with Batman at a comic-con convention. Leia is 38 and is concerned about the response from her white Southern family when she shares the news she is pregnant with a bi-racial baby. Leia doesn't break the news to her family because of extenuating family problems. She learns her 90 year old grandmother, Birchie, is suffering from a rapidly progressing form of dementia. She goes with her niece to take care of Birchie's situation in Birchville, Alabama. Once in Birchville, Leia learns her grandmother has been hiding more than her illness from her. A trunk, that had been hidden in the attic, is discovered to hold a skeleton. After Birchie and her friend Wattie try to remove the trunk from Birchie's home, the entire town becomes aware of the skeleton in the trunk. It forces the townspeople to take sides, and Leia becomes more aware of family secrets.

Our Review: Most in attendance would give the book a 4 star rating out of 5. Goodreads gave a rating of 3.98 out of 5.0, while Barnes and Noble gave a rating of 4.9 out of 5. The book was chosen by the Grand Rapids Public Library as one of their summer reads. Most of us are interested in reading Jackson's newest novel, *Never Have I Ever*.

Food Served: Baked Brie with Apples and Bacon Topping – served with water crackers
Swedish Pecans
Vidalia Onion Dip served with Kettle Potato Chips
Cucumber Tomato Salad
Marinated Chicken Tenders
Mini Cinnamon Buns
Lemony-Berry Tart

Highlights of Discussion: We liked the humor of Leia and the way she approached problems with a no-nonsense way of taking action. We discussed the title, and the implications within the story: step-sisters and half-sisters. There was also some confusion about the type of work that Leia did as a comic book artist. Some wanted to have illustrations included in the book to help visualize the descriptions of the panels that Leia worked on while trying to find a beginning for her character Violet. We talked about Lewy Body dementia and the symptoms of the disease that Birchie was having, such as visual hallucinations. Some of us wondered about the possibility of Birchie and Wattie having a lesbian relationship, and if Birchie's father had molested her as a young girl.

Attendance: Sandy Oato, Ginny Martin, Laura Lewakowski, Nancy McQuate, Nancy Schellenberg, Mary Grant, and Nancy Dausman.

Business/Suggestions: None at this time.