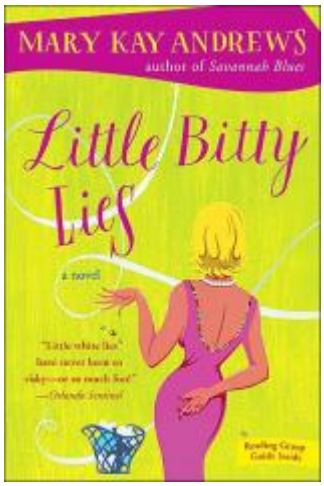
Little Bitty Lies

by Mary Kay Andrews



About the Book

In a suburban Atlanta neighborhood where divorce is as rampant as kudzu, Mary Bliss McGowan doesn't notice that her own marriage is in trouble until the summer night she finds a note from her husband, telling her he's gone -- and taken the family fortune with him.

Stunned and humiliated, a desperate Mary Bliss, left behind with her seventeen-year-old daughter, Erin, and a mountain of debt, decides to salvage what's left of her life by telling one little bitty lie.

At first, Mary Bliss simply tells friends and family that Parker is out of town on a consulting job. Then the lies start to snowball, until Parker turns up dead. Or does he?

Mary Bliss's formerly staid existence careens into overdrive as she copes with an oversexed teenager, a mother-in-law with Ethel Merman delusions, and the sudden but delicious shock of finding herself pursued by two men: the next-door neighbor who's looking for a suitable second wife, and a dangerously attractive ex-cop who's looking for the truth about Parker McGowan.

Little Bitty Lies is a comic Southern novel about all the important things in life: marriage and divorce, mothers and daughters, friendship and betrayal, small-town secrets, and one woman's lifelong quest for home -- and the perfect recipe for chicken salad.

Discussion Guide

1. Mary Bliss and Katherine have been friends for more than a decade, and the saying "opposites attract" seems to describe their friendship. Are Katharine and Mary Bliss really as different as they seem? What makes their friendship so strong? What do they have in common?

2. Mary Bliss encourages Katherine to reconcile with Charlie, who cheated on Katharine and was living with another woman. In one instance Mary Bliss says to her, "Honestly, sweetie, he's too good a man to just throw away like this." Why does she think Katharine should take Charlie back when she makes it very clear that she will not give Parker a second chance?

3. Mary Bliss thinks her life is perfect, or at least perfectly well ordered, until Parker leaves. Do you think she was happy in her marriage? Did she miss any signs that her marriage was not as perfect as she thought? When Mary Bliss finally has the chance to confront Parker, he puts the blame on her for his leaving. What do you think about this?

4. Parker's leaving is the catalyst Mary Bliss needs to make changes in her life -- and to change herself.

"Maybe there was a smidgen of rebel beaten down inside her. Maybe Parker's leaving had unlocked this side of her." Describe Mary Bliss as she appears at the beginning of the novel. How has she changed by the end of the story?

5. Mary Bliss visits Eula regularly at the nursing home, cooks her favorite foods, and brings her flowers. Even after Parker leaves, Mary Bliss continues to visit Eula. Why is Eula so hostile to Mary Bliss? Why does Mary Bliss feel such a sense of responsibility for Eula? Did Eula's decision about her estate surprise you?

6. There are references throughout the story to Mary Bliss's childhood. "Her own daddy, James Clewitt, had abandoned his family. Had told her mama he was going to Florida to look for work.. Drove away in a 1968 green Ford Falcon. And that was that. Never to return." How have the circumstances of Mary Bliss's childhood affected her as an adult? She sees Parker's behavior as worse than her father's because "Parker had not only abandoned them, he'd stolen their future." Do you agree with Mary Bliss on this?

7. Discuss the relationships Mary Bliss has with the women in her life -- Katharine, Erin, Eula -- and how each one is important to her.

8. Katharine plays an integral role in the plan to fake Parker's death. Why does she do this? Is it merely because she's Mary Bliss's best friend, or are there other reasons?

9. Mary Bliss and Matt Hayslip meet under unusual circumstances, and she does not particularly like him at their first meeting. What changes her mind about him? Mary Bliss and Matt's relationship is clouded by lies and deception. In one instance he says to her, "What about you? Are you capable of telling the truth?." As she says about their relationship, "they had done everything backward." Why, ultimately, does their relationship work?

10. The title of the book, **Little Bitty Lies**, is an understatement. What do you think of the lies that abound in the book? Is there any character who does not resort to lies and deception? During a conversation with Charlie, Mary Bliss feels bad for deceiving him but has "already made an uneasy peace with her conscience, telling herself the ends justified the means." In Mary Bliss's case, do you think the ends justified the means?

Author Bio

Mary Kay Andrews is the *New York Times* bestselling author of LADIES' NIGHT, SPRING FEVER, SUMMER RENTAL, THE FIXER UPPER, DEEP DISH, BLUE CHRISTMAS, SAVANNAH BREEZE, HISSY FIT, LITTLE BITTY LIES and SAVANNAH BLUES. A former journalist for *The Atlanta Journal Constitution*, she lives in Atlanta, Georgia.

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