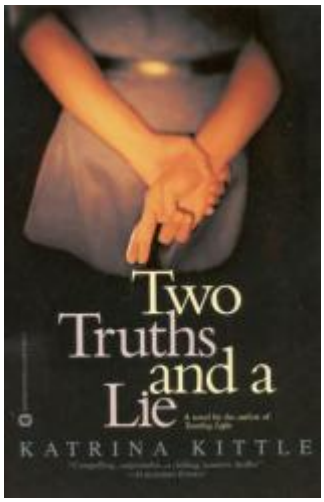
Two Truths and a Lie

by Katrina Kittle



About the Book

"So often the truth needed a little spicing up."

Dair Canard has made up tales since she was a child. Now, as an adult, she finds herself lying at the slightest provocation, with greater and greater finesse. She has established herself as an actress, and bonded with her husband, Peyton, on the premise of her greatest lie ever--a fictitious twin sister who died at the age of 10. But Dair now finds herself at a point in her life where her lies threaten to avalanche. The mysterious death of a dear friend, the divorce of her parents, her increasingly serious drinking problem, and the strain of deceiving Peyton all finally collide.

While attempting to sort the truth from the lies, Dair encounters a blurry line between what is real and what she has made up. Groping to make sense of the events unfolding around her, Dair finally begins to listen to an inner voice she has ignored for too long, in a desperate attempt to uncover the secret that has haunted her since child-hood. Yet it is only when she frees herself to commu-nicate honestly with everyone and everything around her that the mystery surrounding her friend's death starts to unravel. As she struggles to get her life back on track, Dair learns the truth about her friend's death…and all her lies come tumbling down to unveil a few basic truths, one of which is that each of us has something to hide.

Two Truths a Lie explores the consequences of self-deception, and the complicated relationships we share with everyone in our lives.

Discussion Guide

1. In what way does the animal communication in the story parallel the book's overall themes of human communication and honesty?

2. The main character, Dair, is an actress. How does her career of choice help feed her lying- both to others and to herself?

3. Examine all of the characters who are keeping secrets or telling lies of varying degrees. Look at Dair, Peyton, Marielle, Matt, Mr. Lively, Cassie, R.B., even minor characters like Malcolm, Gayle and Andy. How are the motivations different? How successful is each and why? In what ways does their withholding affect their communication with others and with themselves?

4. Many scenes in the book show human characters communicating through language, but we discover that what the characters say is not an accurate reflection of what they are thinking or feeling. Examine such

scenes as Dair and Cassie in Burnett Woods, Peyton and R.B. in the truck, Dair "admitting" to Peyton that she dumped the vodka, Andy and Dair at the zoo, Gayle confronting Dair about the dress, etc. In what other ways, besides speech, is the true exchange communicated? In what other ways, besides speech, is the true exchange obscured?

5. Our own bodies communicate with us, through dreams, memories, illness--frequently stress or sadness causes us illness, depression can be brought on by memories, memories can be triggered by our sensory perceptions, etc. What are Dair's messages from her own body regarding her "lie" about her twin? How does she respond to the messages?

6. What affect does Peyton's belief in reincarnation have on the story? According to his belief, one of his "lessons" is to learn to trust his intuition. What does his intuition tell him about Sylvan? Is there any connection between his belief that he'd known Dair before and the truth about her twin?

7. Is there any suggestion of reincarnation in any other characters-- human and non-human?

8. There is a recurring motif of "practice"- whether it's practicing aikido, a play, dance steps, or the Twelve Steps. How does the idea of practice relate to Peyton's belief in reincarnation?

9. Four characters struggle with issues of alcoholism and/or addiction. In what ways do they fit and not fit the stereotypes of alcoholics and drug addicts?

10. How does the issue of addiction relate to the overall theme of communication?

11. How does the setting of the zoo relate to the addiction issues in the book? How does it relate to the theme of communication?

12. Do you believe Dair has actually acknowledged that she has a drinking problem? How successful do you think she will be in recovery?

13. What affect does appearance have on the truth? How do details like Craig's dress cloud the truth and the search for an explanation?

14. How do you feel about the animal communication and Cassie's description of how it works? Do you feel such communication is possible, or more likely based on intuition and observation? Have you ever had an experience where you felt a communication was exchanged between you and another species?

Author Bio

Katrina Kittle has lived in the Dayton, Ohio, area for most of her life. She grew up in a home where books were prized possessions, and original stories and poems were given as gifts. Her father is a voracious "chain reader," who encouraged her to read widely, and still greets her at the door with, "Did you bring me any books?" Her childhood was full of horses and books and hiking in the woods and camping with Girl Scouts and bossing the neighborhood kids into huge theatrical productions.

Originally interested in dance and theater, Kittle studied at the North Carolina School of the Arts and Ohio University, first as a theater major, then accepting an invitation to join the Honors Tutorial Program in English. She had a double major in English and education, worked in the theater costume shop, rode on the university's equestrian team, kept a Theater minor, and graduated in 1990 with a BA in English and a BS in Education, earning the honor of Outstanding Graduating Senior for both departments.

After graduating, Kittle taught high school Advanced Placement British Literature for five years, then spent several years freelancing as a children's theater director and creative writing instructor. She has worked as a writer-in-residence and taught creative writing workshops for several elementary, middle, and high schools, universities, and organizations. She has taught students as young as third grade and has had an 80-year-old student in her Fiction Intensive at The Antioch Writers' Workshop.

During "the freelance years," Kittle also worked in case management support at the AIDS Foundation Miami Valley (now the AIDS Resource Center), cleaned houses (which she found "very Zen-like and perfect for the writing life: you get left alone with your hands busy doing mindless work while your brain can simmer story ideas"), and worked as a veterinary assistant.

Kittle then taught 6th- and 7th-grade English at the Miami Valley School in Dayton, where she directed a middle school play each year. If she were to remain teaching, she would wish to be nowhere else, but she is so grateful to be fulfilling a lifelong dream to write full-time.

She is the author of *Traveling Light* and *Two Truths and a Lie*. Her third novel, *The Kindness of Strangers*, was released in February 2006. Early chapters from this third novel earned Katrina grants from the Ohio Arts

Council and from the Montgomery County Arts and Cultural District. *The Kindness of Strangers* was selected as a Book Sense pick for February, and was the Fiction Book winner for the 2006 Great Lakes Book Awards.

Kittle runs and studies Latin dance. She's also on a cooking spree (when she's "cooking" figuratively on a new book, she's usually cooking a lot literally, too). In addition to her favorite pesto, she's especially fond of a recent espresso-chocolate cake she discovered in Nigella Lawson's fabulous cookbook *Feast*. She is also dabbling in Indian cooking, and so far her friends are willing guinea pigs.

With her purchase of a house in June 2009, Kittle has become obsessed with gardening. She tilled garden beds and planted seedlings before she unpacked a single box *inside* the house. With the gardening came new cooking challenges --- how to preserve the harvest? She is determined to learn to can before next fall's garden bounty.

Kittle loves theater and tries to get her theater "fix" at least once a year, usually auditioning for something at the Dayton Theatre Guild.

She also loves to travel. Recent travel highlights include spending the night with a goat under her bed in Ghana; riding horseback through the hills of Sintra, Portugal; and floating on her back in the Mediterranean looking up at the cliff-cut city of Positano, Italy.

Katrina Kittle keeps Dayton, Ohio, as her home base, where she is the proud aunt of Amy and Nathan, and where she lives with her assistant, Joey the cat.

Critical Praise

"**Two Truths and a Lie** is fiction as it ought to be…a superbly tense and witty novel that offers a fresh angle on the human soul. It will leave you craving for more from this deliciously talented writer."

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