



Discussion Guide

“Tattoos and Mistletoe” in *The Naughty List*

by Susan Lyons writing as Susan Fox

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Holiday anthology with Donna Kauffman and Cynthia Eden

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These questions are available for download (in PDF format) from my website.

Thanks so much for reading “Tattoos and Mistletoe.” I hope you enjoyed it and I’d love to hear from you. I’m happy to provide bookmarks and autographed bookplates; just send me your name and address. Please visit my website for info on other titles, insights into how each book came about, excerpts, reviews, recipes, a monthly contest, and other fun stuff.

Now, let’s talk about the story. I suggest you skim through the questions and pick the ones that interest you the most.

1. *Leaving home.* Charlie left Whistler as a teenager, vowing never to return. What do you think of her decision? In her shoes, would you have done the same thing?
2. *Going home again.* When Charlie left, she vowed never to return, yet her aunt found a way of bringing her back. In Charlie’s shoes, would you have returned to Whistler? If so, how would you have acted? Would you have hidden away, like Charlie?
3. *Turning points.* In our lives, we often face turning points. For Charlie, the clause in her aunt’s will presented a major one. She could return to Whistler to accept her inheritance, or stay in Toronto and carry on with her current life. How would her life have been different if she’d stayed in Toronto? What turning points have you faced and, in hindsight, are you happy about the choices you made?
4. *Aunt Patty’s scheme.* What do you think of Charlie’s aunt’s scheme? What do you think of Aunt Patty as a person? Is her behavior as a young woman, a middle-aged one, and a dying one understandable?
5. *Kids who don’t fit.* Both Charlie and LJ were social misfits. Why didn’t they fit in? How did other people treat them? How did this affect their teen years, and their lives afterward?
6. *Who was Charlie, really?* If you had to describe Charlie as a teen, what would you say? In what ways is she different as an adult, and in what ways has she stayed the same?
7. *How about LJ?* If you had to describe LJ as a teen, what would you say? In what ways is he different as an adult, and in what ways has he stayed the same?
8. *Looking beyond face value.* When Charlie was a teen, only two or three people saw her for who she really was. Who were they, and why did they see the real Charlie? Did anyone see LJ for who he really was, and not just the late-to-develop math and science geek?
9. *Family.* What was Charlie’s family like, and how did they influence her life? What was LJ’s family like, and how did they influence his life? If you had parents like hers, or like his, how would you have acted with them?

10. *Mr. D.* What's the role of Mr. DiGiannantonio in the story?
11. *Ginger and Jake.* What role did Charlie's friends Ginger and Jake play in her life?
12. *Courage.* Both Charlie and LJ show moments of weakness and moments of courage. What ones can you think of, and how do you explain their behavior?
13. *The school dance.* That night was important to both of them. What happened? Why did each behave the way they did?
14. *No-one can measure up.* For LJ, the teenage girl who fascinated him is the measuring stick against which he compares other women. What does that say about him? Have you ever met someone who made such an impression on you that no-one else can compare?
15. *Christmas.* Initially, Charlie pretty much hates Christmas. Why? How does she feel about Christmas by the end of the story, and what factors influence her change of opinion?
16. *Tattoos.* What do you think of tattoos? Do you have any? If so, what do they symbolize to you? If not, have you ever thought of getting one? What would it be?
17. *LJ's ultimatum.* At first, LJ is pretty much blown away that Charlie will have sex with him. She fascinates him, just like she did as a teen. Then he realizes sex isn't good enough, so he cuts her off. Can you trace the evolution of his feelings for her, and why he issues this ultimatum? Do you understand why she reacts to it the way she does?
18. *Aunt Patty's letter.* If you were Charlie, how would you have reacted to that letter? Is it all you'd have wanted? What else would you have wished for?
19. *Coming to terms with the past.* Charlie's aunt suggests that you need to come to terms with the past to be able to move on and live a happy, regret-free life. What do you think? Did Aunt Patty finally do that? How about Charlie?
20. *Charlie's decision.* Charlie is all set to leave Whistler again when she changes her mind. Why does she decide to go to LJ?
21. *A happy ending?* Do you think Charlie and LJ will have a "happily ever after"?

I'd love to hear your thoughts on some of these questions and issues!

Email me at susan@susanlyons.ca.

And don't forget to drop by my website: www.susanfox.ca.

You can also find me on Facebook by looking for Susan Lyons Fox.