

# *As Though You Were Mine*

## **Reader's Guide**

1. Each of Julie's family members express surprise that Brian has named her guardian to Lucy and Mikey. What is at the root of each of their misgivings about Julie as guardian? What does it mean that Brian does not appear to have the same hesitation?
2. Julie says she and her sibling grew up as Lutheran, "sort of," and as an adult, is agnostic, yet she feels obligated to nurture, or at least honor, Lucy and Mikey's religious beliefs. What do you see as her responsibility when considering Lucy and Mikey's faith and/or religious upbringing, especially given the church community and environment their parents were members of?
3. Julie is fiercely independent. Why do you think this is? How does she learn to accept help?
4. Family members frequently put each other into "boxes;" they see one another in a certain, expected way. How has Julie done this with her family members? How does her perception of them change as she learns more about them? What kind of "box" was Julie in?
5. Shortly after Grant arrives, he and Julie each throw serious accusations at the other (Grant suggests Julie has been abusing them and Julie thinks Grant might have kidnapped the kids). What is at play behind these accusations? Are they to be taken at face value? Or do they represent something else?
6. In Chapter Thirty-One, Grant says, "Why do I feel like we just lost something?" Upon learning the truth about the children, have Julie and Grant lost something? Why does Grant feel differently about the situation than Julie does?
7. Julie talks about the circular arguments she has with others about not wanting to have children of her own: "*...liking children and wanting to have them myself meant different things.*" If she doesn't want children, it must mean she doesn't like them, and if she does like them and is good with kids, there must be something wrong with her if she doesn't want to have any of her own. Do you think her experience is common? Does becoming Lucy and Mikey's guardian change her opinion about having children? Do you think she'll decide to have more kids in the future?
8. How has Julie changed over the course of the novel? What has she learned about herself?