

Discussion Guide

for *Age before Beauty*

- ❖ When the story opens, new mom Allie has undergone some changes she didn't expect, both in her body and her outlook. Identify some ways she has changed. How does having a baby alter a woman's life?
- ❖ Allie, Joan, and Tori are sisters with a common background and unique personalities. Describe their differences and similarities. With which character do you most identify, and why?
- ❖ Allie describes the event she attends with Joan as "a stupid party where some fanatical woman would try to force her to buy something she didn't want and for which she had no use." What happens to change her opinion about this type of party? If you've attended similar events, what do you think of them?
- ❖ Though she desperately wants to stay home with Joanie instead of returning to work, Allie can't force herself to rely on Eric as her sole financial support. Why? Does she overcome this fear?
- ❖ When a 'rash' appears on Joanie's face, Allie panics. Is her reaction a common one for new moms? If you're a mom, have you ever overreacted to a situation involving your child?
- ❖ Allie's dislike of Betty is based on a series of misunderstandings. Identify some of them, and discuss the ways their relationship changes throughout the course of the story.
- ❖ Eric and Allie were raised in vastly different environments. How do their parents' relationships affect their marriage?
- ❖ In what ways do Eric and Allie each put their marriage at risk?
- ❖ Because of a disturbing incident in his youth, Eric distrusts people who go to church. Is his attitude justified? Why does he decide to give church a try at the end of the story?
- ❖ As Allie struggles to resolve her growing list of problems, a song she learned years before in church keeps coming to mind. How does this help her resolve her problems? What role does music play in the life of a believer?
- ❖ Author Virginia Smith says the engagement scene in *Age before Beauty* never fails to bring tears to her eyes. If you are married, describe how you became engaged. If you're single, what is your idea of a romantic marriage proposal?



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By Virginia Smith

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