*The Winter Sea* by Susanna Kearsley

**Discussion Questions**

1. Why might Susanna Kearsley have utilized a story-within-a story device rather than use a straightforward telling of a historical novel? What does the character of Carrie McClelland, as a writer, add to the story?

2. Do the two stories, past and present, parallel one other? Is one of the stories in one of the time-periods more engaging than the other? Did either Sophie Paterson's story or Carrie McClelland’s hold your interest more?

3. What, if anything, do the heroines—Sophie and Carrie—have in common? How do they differ? Are the two women believable? Does Kearsley do a good job of creating rich, well-rounded characters?

4. Talk about the men in both stories. Which of the contemporary men—Jimmy Keith, Stuie, Graham, or Angus—do you find most appealing? Does Carrie make the right choice at the end?

5. Kearsley incorporates a good deal of historical fact into her story. Do you find her historical research intrusive or overbearing--or does Kearsley blend it seamlessly into her story line? What about her remarks in the book's afterword...did you read it?

6. Can you explain genetic memory and how it enables Carrie to access the past? Do you believe there might be such a thing as genetic memory? Is it like the "past lives" concept?

7. The book in many ways is self-referential: an author writing about an author writing. What does Kearsley seem to suggest about the craft of writing—in terms of its ability to merge past with present--or to bring historical events and characters alive?

8. Many reviewers mentioned that the book involved them on a deeply emotional level, evoking tears. Did it involve you in the same manner?

9. What is the significance of the book's title, *The Winter Sea*?

10. Does this book deliver—in terms of romance and suspense? Did you find it slow and deliberate, or fast-paced and engaging?

11. How would you compare *The Winter* Sea to books in a similar vein, like Diana Outlander, A.S. Byatt's Possession, or Deborah Harkness's The Discovery of Witches?