

THE SISTER EFFECT

Note: These questions contain spoilers about the story, so we recommend that you wait until after you've finished the book to read the questions.

1. How did your feelings about the characters evolve as you read the book?
2. In your opinion, does the title *The Sister Effect* fit the story? Why or why not?
3. How would you react if someone you loved showed up on your doorstep one day and asked you to raise their child?
4. What lesson do you think Finley had to learn in order to live peacefully?
5. How did Lester's and Molly's behavior when Finley and Sloane were kids affect their behavior and emotions today? How did they impact the way Finley is raising Aubrey?
6. When Molly threw a family party, she insisted on margaritas. Do you think that was the right decision? Why or why not?
7. How did you feel when Sloane slipped on her one-year anniversary? And when she slipped again after Ellis's injury?
8. Discuss Jericho's story line. Why do you think he agreed to be the best man at his brother's wedding to his own ex-wife? Would you have been strong enough to do the same? (Or did you see that as a strength or a weakness on his part?)
9. What was the most emotional part of the story for you, what hit you the hardest?
10. How do you think Finley and Sloane's relationship changed in the sixteen months of Sloane's sobriety?
11. What moments in the story made you laugh?
12. Were you happy with both Finley's and Sloane's endings?
13. How do you think Aubrey will remember this time in her life when she grows up?

SUGGESTED MENU



Cinnamon Custard Yum-Yum
(recipe follows)

THE SISTER EFFECT

CINNAMON CUSTARD YUM-YUM



1 loaf brioche or other buttery, soft bread

½ tsp sea salt

4 whole eggs + 6 yolks, divided

4 cups milk, divided

7 cinnamon sticks, divided

¾ cup sugar, divided

¼ cup + 2 Tbsp maple syrup, divided

1 Tbsp butter

Cinnamon for sprinkling

This recipe has two parts, essentially bread pudding with custard sauce.

Bread pudding:

Cut the bread into ½-inch pieces and place in a large mixing bowl. Sprinkle over with sea salt and stir gently.

On the stove, heat 2 cups of milk, ½ cup of sugar, 2 Tbsp maple syrup and 4 cinnamon sticks to 180 degrees, so it's hot but not boiling. Stir frequently. Set aside to cool for about 15 minutes. Discard cinnamon sticks.

Grease a 13x9 inch baking pan with 1 Tbsp butter. Preheat oven to 325 degrees.

In a separate bowl, whisk together 4 whole eggs plus 2 yolks until pale yellow. While continuing to whisk constantly, add about half a cup of the milk mixture in a slow, steady stream. Continue adding milk in increments, whisking constantly. When it's all combined, pour over the bread and stir well.

READER DISCUSSION GUIDE

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CINNAMON CUSTARD YUM-YUM

Put the bread mixture into the prepared baking pan. Sprinkle with cinnamon. Place the baking pan in a larger pan and add water between the two pans, about halfway up. This water bath will prevent the bread pudding from overcooking on the edges. Bake until the interior temperature reaches 170 degrees, about 40 minutes.

Remove baking pan from the larger pan and place on a wire rack to cool. After it's cool, cover and refrigerate.

Custard sauce:

Heat 2 cups of milk, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of maple syrup and 3 cinnamon sticks on the stove to 180 degrees, so it's hot but not boiling. Set aside for 15 minutes.

Heat about 1 inch of water to a simmer in a pan that's slightly smaller at the rim than the bowl you'll be using in the next step.

In a medium stainless steel bowl, whisk 4 egg yolks with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar until pale yellow. While whisking constantly, add the milk mixture to the eggs in a slow stream. Balance this bowl over the pan of simmering water, so the egg mixture is being heated by the steam but the bowl is not touching the boiling water. Stir constantly until the mixture reaches 170-175 degrees. Don't let it reach 180, or it might curdle.

Immediately place the bowl into an ice bath and stir occasionally until it's cool. Refrigerate.

To serve, warm the bread pudding and top with chilled custard sauce.

