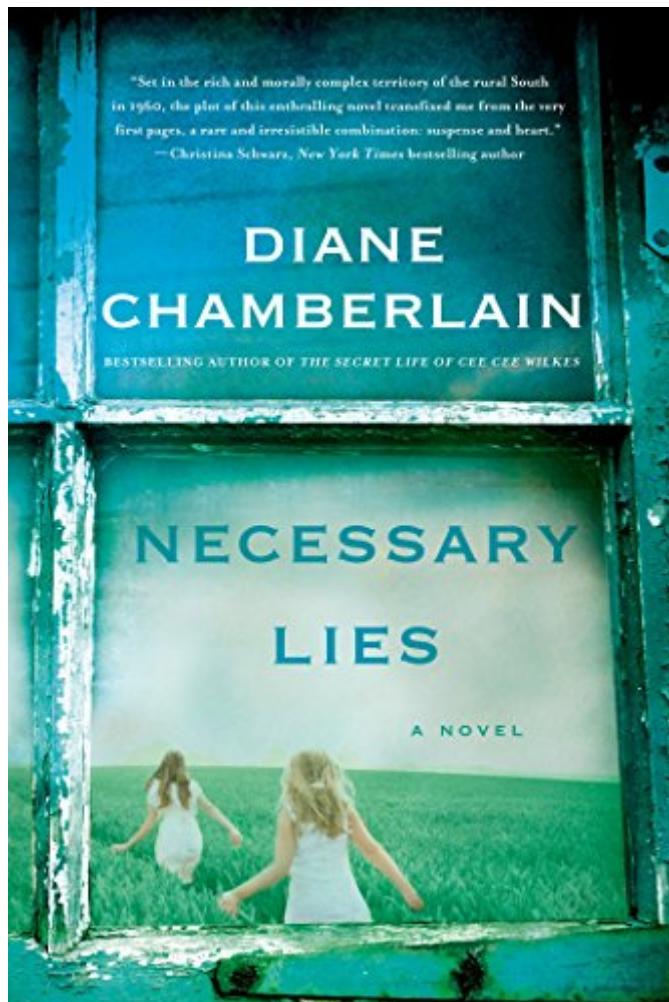


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# Necessary Lies: A Novel



## **Synopsis**

Bestselling author Diane Chamberlain delivers a breakout book about a small southern town fifty years ago, and the darkest and most hopeful places in the human heart. After losing her parents, fifteen-year-old Ivy Hart is left to care for her grandmother, older sister and nephew as tenants on a small tobacco farm. As she struggles with her grandmother's aging, her sister's mental illness and her own epilepsy, she realizes they might need more than she can give. When Jane Forrester takes a position as Grace County's newest social worker, she doesn't realize just how much her help is needed. She quickly becomes emotionally invested in her clients' lives, causing tension with her boss and her new husband. But as Jane is drawn in by the Hart women, she begins to discover the secrets of the small farm—secrets much darker than she would have guessed. Soon, she must decide whether to take drastic action to help them, or risk losing the battle against everything she believes is wrong. Set in rural Grace County, North Carolina in a time of state-mandated sterilizations and racial tension, *Necessary Lies* tells the story of these two young women, seemingly worlds apart, but both haunted by tragedy. Jane and Ivy are thrown together and must ask themselves: how can you know what you believe is right, when everyone is telling you it's wrong?

## **Book Information**

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## Customer Reviews

This book was very informative about a subject I hardly knew about, involuntary sterilization. The life term of suffering and hardships visited on these unsuspecting victims is inexcusable. To think it wasn't truly investigated until 1974 is unbelievable. That the law existed since 1929 is comparable to intended genocide. Please read this not just because it was well written by a noted author but as a memory of those who endured this hideous chapter of our history.

In a impoverished town in the south, a "well to do" newlywed decides she wants to work outside the home. This decision goes against the will of her husband. The choice of work is altruistic but she is ill-equipped to handle the stress of her choices when trying to help her clients and keep her husband happy.

Couldn't get through this book. I found it too depressing (even though it's supposed to be realistic). After reading a little more than 10% I switched to a different book. Seemed to move too slowly for my liking and the character decisions reminded me of what things were like for women back then, much less poor women. Guess I couldn't wait for the redeeming parts.

Almost from the very first page of A Necessary Lies, I could feel the world of the 1960s in North Carolina swirling around me. Even though I'd never been there, I connected with the characters. As a retired social worker who has seen many of these kinds of families, and as a young person during the 60s, I felt very keenly the issues of those days. Told in alternating first person perspectives, the story shifts between Ivy Hart, a teenaged girl living in a shack on a tobacco farm, and Jane Forrester, the newly married social worker who is passionately involved in this new job of hers, even though her physician husband is opposed to it. Right away I could relate to each of them, and even though I'd never been in Ivy Hart's shoes, I had many clients who were just as disadvantaged. The Eugenics Laws were new to my experience, however, even though I had read about these kinds of issues. Cringing as I read, I knew that the story was going to unfold in very dramatic ways. But the issues of mentally challenged individuals, sometimes institutionalized during the 1960s (and before), were practices I had seen firsthand. I will never forget how those experiences would change

everything about how I viewed the world. In this fictionalized tale, we see how one social worker's passion takes her outside the lines, risking everything to save one girl. How does Jane put everything on the line for Ivy? What happens to alter the course she had chosen? And what would be the final outcome years later? A must-read for anyone who cares about social issues and justice for the disadvantaged, Chamberlain's story (and the preceding prequel called *The First Lie*) was one I could not put down. Five stars.

I loved this book! From beginning, to middle, to end it held my attention. When I finished the story, alone at night all by myself, I said to myself aloud, "Wow!" I didn't realize until the authors notes at the end that one of the topics involved in the story was actually used in some states between 1929-1975. I was appalled! In 2012 monetary Compensation was offered to those who were subjected to this unorthodox procedure. I wish I had known of this prior to reading this story. Am trying not to give a spoiler alert:( I found one of the characters a little weak, the young social worker, I just felt she was a little self absorbed, a little unrealistic. Also her superior whom she loved at first suddenly was very critical of her. I get it, but thought it could have been a more casual transition. It didn't change my feelings towards her at the end, but it thought it was worth mentioning. I will recommend this book to all friends and family. I would so love to discuss it with others! I think it would make a great book club read!

I read this because our book club selected it. Although I think the issue addressed--eugenics--is an important one, but I would not have selected this story on my own. The writing is okay, but I have read many fiction authors who are much better. I felt much of the plot was contrived and I could guess what was coming. The best part of the book is the final scene. I would recommend this book for people who would like to know more about the central issue.

This story revolves around the topic of eugenics in North Carolina in the 1960's. I found the storyline slow moving and I couldn't connect with any of the characters well enough for this book to be a "page turner" for me. Like too many of the books I've read recently, the plot moves almost painfully slowly until the climax and then the author rushes through the conclusion as if to wrap up an already-too-long story. This is the way I perceived this novel. All that said, I am glad that I read the book,, but I can't say it's one of my favorite Diane Chamberlain novels.

Very interesting story based on recent American history. Author obviously did her research. Her

depiction of a poor, small, Southern mid-century family was not far off the mark. The fiction portion of the plot was a bit formulaic but it was a good story, a quick read, and I'd read other books by the author.

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