OVER MAYA DEAD BODY – DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Over Maya Dead Body* opens with another of Serena’s mother’s sage advice—don’t stare; it’s rude—to which Serena quips she’s paid to stare. Yet throughout the story Serena resists taking a long hard look at both Nate and Tanner, or more precisely, at their feelings for her. Have you ever resisted confronting another about their feelings toward you or yours toward them, whether bad or good? How did you eventually handle the situation?
2. Serena copes with her grief by throwing herself in her work. Do you think that will ultimately leave her worse off or better? How do you cope with grief?
3. Serena struggles with the seeming unfairness of her uncle’s death and admits that her grandfather’s death years before had caused her to really struggle with her faith, until her uncle helped her see things more clearly. Now she says: I’d seen good come out of the bad enough times to solidify my hope. Have you struggled with these kinds of things? Have you managed to reconcile them in your mind and spirit?
4. Nate and Aunt Martha have kept significant secrets about themselves from their loved ones. Do you think it’s okay to keep such secrets from those closest to you? Why or Why not?
5. Time and again Serena is reminded that appearances can’t always be trusted. Do you tend to believe what people want you to believe about them (by the outward impression they give)? If so, has it ever gotten you into trouble?
6. It’s become increasingly common for countries to demand the repatriation of their antiquities—from both museums and private collections—to their country of origin, whereas others point to how frequently antiquities in some countries continue to be lost to looters or wars or poor climate conditions. What do you think about the dilemma?
7. Tanner and Serena disagree over what is more noble—declaring your love for someone, even though they are already engaged to another or quietly bowing out so as not to add undue stress and potentially spoil his or her happiness. What do you think?
8. Serena compares our character growth to the creation of sea glass in that it had once been broken and unwanted, but the action of the waves and rocks and sand transformed it into a beautiful, sought-after treasure. Can you see how strengths and positive qualities you possess were honed by difficult circumstances?
9. In the end, Serena comes to accept that this side of heaven people won’t always get face the justice we think they deserve. Is that easy or difficult for you to accept? Why or why not?
10. Nate reminds Serena that “Life is a journey, not a destination.” Do you tend to live in the present or are you always looking to some future state as being when your life will finally be what you want it to be? Has Serena’s story made you reevaluate how you think about your life in any way?