

Book Group Guide – **BREATHING**  
Cheryl Renée Herbsman

A. Discussion Questions

1. Think about the ways in which Savannah and Jackson support each others' dreams. Do you have someone in your life who supports you in this way? Is there anyone to whom you could offer this type of support?
2. Discuss Savannah's relationship with her mother. What did you notice about its complexities? Talk about their arguments and the underlying signs of love.
3. How does Savannah's asthma tie in with her growth as a character?
4. Discuss Dog and his attitude. Why do you think he acts the way he does toward his family? (Note: see his character sketch on the website.)
5. What did you like or not like about reading the Southern dialect?
6. Discuss both Savannah's and Jackson's responsibilities to their families and how this affects their characters/choices/relationship.

B. Recipe: Hello Dollies

**Hello Dollies** (AKA Seven-Layer-Bars)

[As shared by Jackson and Savannah at the beach in *Breathing*]

Ingredients:

- 1 stick of butter
- 1 cup of graham cracker crumbs
- 1 cup of chocolate chips
- 1 cup of butterscotch chips
- 1 cup of walnuts
- 1 cup of shredded coconut
- 1 can of sweetened condensed milk

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Melt the butter in the microwave or over the stovetop. Pour into ungreased 9x13'' pan. Tilt pan to spread butter evenly. Sprinkle on graham cracker crumbs and shake pan to even out. Then sprinkle on the rest of the solid ingredients as listed. Next pour the sweetened condensed milk over the whole thing. [Tip: include all ingredients, even if you don't usually like nuts or coconut: trust me!]

Bake at 350 degrees for 25 to 30 minutes. Let cool in pan. Cut into bars. Enjoy!

C. Project or craft idea:

Savannah enjoys writing in a journal, especially when she's upset. Try making your own journal.

You can make the paper yourself. (Find directions here: <http://www.pioneerthinking.com/makingpaper.html>) or use notebook paper and cardboard. I once made a journal out of a cut up pizza box and computer paper. Or take a store bought journal and decorate the cover. You can sew a cover out of fabric or make a collage by cutting images or words that move you out of magazines. Or you could draw or paint the cover, whatever medium works for you. Then try using your journal to get all your feelings out and down when life gets complicated.

#### D. Web links

To learn more about asthma:

<http://asthma.about.com/>

[http://kidshealth.org/parent/medical/lungs/teen\\_asthma.html](http://kidshealth.org/parent/medical/lungs/teen_asthma.html)

<http://www.webmd.com/asthma/tc/asthma-in-teens-and-adults-overview>

To learn more about the Carolina coast:

<http://www.carolinaliving.com/coast/>

To read other romantic stories, check out these authors:

<http://www.sarahdessen.com/>

<http://susanecolasanti.com/>

<http://sarahockler.com/>

To learn more about the author:

<http://www.cherylreneeherbsman.com/>

#### E. Playlist

Love Story – Taylor Swift

Fall For You -- Secondhand Serenade

Hurry Home -- Wavelength

Wish You Were Here --Fleetwood Mac

Going to Carolina In My Mind – James Taylor

Hot ‘n Cold – Katy Perry

Broken – Secondhand Serenade

Our Song – Taylor Swift