

Discussion Questions:

This book centers around an elderly woman, Esther, and her group of lifelong friends who are called 'The Funeral Ladies'. Throughout the book the elderly are discussed with care and respect even though they might be out of touch with modern technologies. How does this view clash with our culture's view of the elderly?

Grief, loss, and regret are recurring themes throughout the book. How did each character handle this aspect of their lives?

In Iris there is a continual internal push and pull: a push toward desiring something bigger for her future, and a pull from not wanting to give up her idyllic small town life. How does this impact the decisions she makes in the novel?

The lake town of Ellerie and the Northwoods of Wisconsin anchor the story in such a unique way. How do you see the setting of this book impacting the story?

Cooper's PTSD, which was also mirrored in Esther's late husband Felix's 'battle fatigue', played a huge role in this book. Why do you think his PTSD got worse in the peace of Ellerie County?

The close-knit community in this book recalls a bygone era when you spent a life building relationships with your neighbors. How does the community of Ellerie County impact the main characters?

The preparing and eating of food is a central theme of this book. How did food form a core element to each of the main characters?

What role did faith play in each of the character's lives?

How did the women of the Larson family support each other despite, and because of, their personality differences?

Do you have a community cookbook on your shelves, and if so what recipes are your favorites?

