

## *Book Club Discussion Guide*

1. Which book club member did you like the most and why? Do you know women with similar characteristics? Lily, lonely and out-of-work; Aggie, a grieving widow, unsure of her position in the community; or Piper, the young salon owner with a health problem who looked for unusual ways to help her through a difficult time in her marriage?
2. Discuss the age differences and backgrounds of the three women. If you have friends of varying ages, what drew you together? Did the book club members form a family?
3. How is communication a real problem for each of the three women? Is it a familiar difficulty in our culture? Did the tea make it easier for the women to tell their personal stories or would it have happened anyway?
4. Lily reveals her deep feelings about libraries and books. What is your favorite thing about books? About a library? About librarians? Have you visited a bookmobile?
5. Have you been touched by cancer or know cancer survivors? How did cancer affect the women?
6. How did the poetry of Emily Dickinson save Lily? How did reading Cristina Rossetti's poems help Aggie escape danger? What about a sparrow saving Piper and the hymn she remembered her husband singing? Have you ever thought about how one simple thing can change events or lives?
7. What interested you about – Boris, Griffo, Sax, Llewellyn. How were the relationships of the two sets of siblings different or the same? Llewellyn and Elcott. Maxine and Sax. Do people ignored by family members or others find ways to strike back?
8. Did you guess who stole the *Book of Cures*? Discuss the murder of the duke and the salesman? Do you think psychological problems can cause people to commit such serious crimes?
9. Would you like to visit the Jardin Estate? Have you been to Europe or visited a chateau? Have you lived in a small town or know others who do? What is appealing about such places? Have you shopped in a place that reminded you of the Emporium? Or the Used Stuff Store?

10. Do you garden? Grow herbs? How have you used them? Do you believe in the healing powers of herbs? Discuss the use of herbal remedies by family, others, or in different cultures.

11. Would you like to sip some “Feel Good” tea? The herb named lively is fictional. These mixes are not intended to be used by readers, because herbal use is dependent on health issues, specific knowledge, and exact ingredient amounts. Some herbs are poisonous. Others can have serious effects.

12. Discuss the quirky components of the story, the whimsical or offbeat elements. For example: Gypsies. Goat farms. Collectible knives and daggers. A personal bookmobile. Small town stores closing up for any reason. Tattoos. Do you have a tattoo or know anyone who does?

13. Have you seen or heard about the monarch butterfly migration?

14. Do you have any experience or connection with rare books? Have you heard about book thefts from libraries and private collections?

15. Have you heard of the Chaos Theory? Did you sense how impending weather – the butterfly effect – was an undercurrent?

16. Are you curious about erotica? By chance, have you read or considered reading *Henry Miller*, *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* or *Fifty Shades of Grey*? Other books of erotica? Are you interested in checking out any of the classics listed in the back? Were you surprised at the famous authors whose writing can be considered as qualifying for the erotica category?

17. Or are you happy to read other books and not spend time on this genre? That’s one of the greatest things about reading and book clubs. There are enough books available for every taste.