

Shoot Me

Topics for Discussion

- 1 Family and home life are very important to the action that takes place in *Shoot Me*, but the house itself, a fictional setting on Cambridge Street in Halifax's South End, figures prominently throughout the novel. Why is the house such an integral part of the characters' lives? What does the house represent for each character? What role does the house play in the novel?
2. The relationship between the sisters in the novel is ongoing and mercurial, but their bond is a strong one. How are Juliet, Faith and Elsie different? What are their similarities? Which sister is most like Aunt Hildy?
3. When the novel opens, Elsie and Graham Brooks' marriage is on the rocks. They come up with a unique way of handling their emotional dilemma by having Graham live in the basement instead of leaving the house altogether. What does this arrangement signify? Is it a good decision?
4. Elsie Brooks is a chronic do-gooder. Her family certainly benefits from this desire to please, but they suffer because of it, too. How is Elsie's personality contributing to or hindering her life?
5. Faith is a woman who suffers from depression. She has no home of her own, no social circle and no job. She dreams of becoming a novelist, but relies on Elsie to give her a roof over her head. Is Elsie's support helpful? What is the difference between helping and enabling someone? Will Faith ever write a book?
6. Juliet and Robert have a love/hate relationship. Their bickering masks underlying resentment. What are the causes of that resentment and do you think Juliet and Robert really love each other?
7. Aunt Hildy's treasure is at the centre of this story. She drives her family crazy with tantalizing clues about this so-called treasure and yet won't offer an explanation for it. At times she even denies its existence. Was it poor judgment on Aunt Hildy's part to involve her family members, or did they have a right to know about this dark secret? Can you think of other novels where family secrets play such a pivotal role?
8. Who is your favorite character? Why?
9. Slater and Eli become members of the family by virtue of being the boyfriends of Elsie's daughters. They are vastly different in some respects. What is it that they have in common?
10. Throughout the novel, the characters are faced with decisions that could alter the lives of the rest of their family members. Knowing Juliet's personality, do you think she would have told the others, if she'd managed to find the treasure first?

11. How is this family similar to your own? How is it different?

12. While all of the characters in *Shoot Me* have good and bad qualities, who do you think is the wisest character?

13. Finding Aunt Hildy's treasure is about more than just looking for loot. It involves the interpersonal relationships between family members and how their reactions to this bizarre quest will shape the rest of their lives. What are the lessons learned from this treasure hunting?

14. Aunt Hildy's secret is not revealed until the end of the book and it shocks the entire family. Do you think Aunt Hildy handled her sorrow in the appropriate way? Do you blame her for her actions or do you forgive her? Does knowing her secret and her sorrow change how you think of her?

15 This novel is first and foremost a love story. It's about the love of a family and how life can be forever changed by one person's actions. What is your definition of a family? Is it only biological ties that bind?