

Discussion Questions

1. Libby feels flawed because of her illiteracy, but learns to accept herself by the end of the book. Do you have a physical or psychological characteristic with which you struggle? Have you ever considered if there may be an upside to the problematic trait?
2. Early in the novel, Michael instructs his children not to run from a fight. Given the circumstances, was this the right thing to do? Would his advice have been different if he had daughters rather than sons?
3. The townspeople were sympathetic to Professor Sawyer's claim to the house and proceeded to shun Michael and his family. It was a peaceful, nonviolent way to support Professor Sawyer, but do you think there may have been a better way?
4. A big theme in this book is how to treat people who are different from us, be it a different culture, level of intelligence, gender, or even outward demeanor. Why do people tend to distrust those who are different?
5. Libby's father is a frustrated and difficult man, yet she feels an instinctive loyalty to him. Does there ever come a point at which a Christian *should* disengage from a parent or a problematic relative?
6. Understanding his father's need for perfection, Jasper knew the professor would never file patents on any of his inventions. Jasper believed he was protecting his father when he secretly patented the inventions. Was he right to do so?
7. For much of the novel, Libby felt limited by her illiteracy and Mirela felt defined by her brutal abduction. Have you ever felt defined by a tragic life event? How were you able to overcome it?
8. Does Mirela have a happy ending or is she making the best of her circumstances? Girls are often raised to view marriage as the culmination of their ambitions, but can a celibate life be a truly fulfilling option?

9. Michael's first marriage was brokered between two sets of parents. Arranged marriages are still common in many parts of the world, and often work well. Why is that? Have you ever known anyone who was part of an arranged marriage?