



Colorado Book Club Resource

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR MAIN STREET BY SINCLAIR LEWIS

1. In his time, Lewis was attacked for breaking-down the abiding American myth of small-town wholesomeness. Lewis painted small-town life as narrow, provincial, and suffocating. Was that a fair assessment back then? Is it a fair assessment today?
2. Does today's technology, travel and telecommunications make a difference? Consider this question particularly in light of today's political climate of red-state, blue-state—amidst claims of heartland "values" vs. East-West Coast "elitism."
3. What is Carol's first impression of Gopher Prairie? Find the passage in which she first sees the town and talk about Lewis' attention to detail.
1. What does Carol's long-deceased father mean for her and for the subsequent events of the story? Think about, especially, how she sees her father in Erik.
2. Talk about both the Jolly Seventeen and the Thanatopsis Club. What is the raison d'etre of each group and what is Lewis' point of satire? How do the women view Carol...and why doesn't she fit in?
3. How does Carol attempt to escape the boredom and narrowness of Gopher Prairie? Do you find her a sympathetic character? What about Kinnecott?
4. Is Carol's budding friendship with Erik a threat to her or a boon?
5. Talk about the difference between Carol's and Vida Sherwin's approaches to getting things accomplished.
6. Why does Carol give up life in Washington and return to Gopher Prairie?
7. Is the ending resolved or unresolved? Is Carol defeated by Gopher Prairie? Will she prevail in her idealism? Or has she learned something from her time in Washington? Will she speak the novel's last lines. Why? Is Lewis, perhaps, suggesting that his common sense is a more preferred approach to life? Or a blending of both common sense and idealism?

Questions by LitLovers.



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