

### Book Club Questions for Strawberry Summer

1. Catherine would love nothing more than to stay in her own home. Do you think that's advisable now that she is getting on in years? Or do you agree with Bill that it's no longer safe for her to live alone? Should Bill have a say in Catherine's decision about whether she should sell her home?
2. Bill thinks that Catherine spends too much time dwelling on the past? Do you agree? What are some of the detriments that come from living in the past? Are there any positive effects that can come from regularly revisiting memories of times gone by?
3. How do you think Catherine's marriage to Lars has affected her outlook on life? How do you think her gardening has helped her repair the damage from that relationship?
4. Why does Catherine write letters to Bill about her feelings when she can confront him face-to-face? Have you ever written a letter that did a better job of helping the recipient understand how you were feeling more effectively than an in-person conversation or phone call?
5. Why do you think Catherine is upset when Bill replaces the old horsehair chair? And why does she draw the line when he suggests replacing her davenport?
6. When we first meet Tom McGraw, what type of impression does he make? Is Tom right to be so upset about Catherine's overgrown yard? Is Catherine right to judge him so harshly about his stance concerning the birds in her garden?
7. When Catherine began experiencing upsetting and mysterious intrusions on her property, did you suspect Tom might be involved? How did you feel when the culprit was revealed to be someone else?
8. Catherine apologizes to Tom at the village hearing for misjudging him. How do you think this apology paves the way for their friendship?
9. When Tom first asks Catherine to go into the pie-selling business with him, she insists she is too old to start something new. Why do you think she feels that way?
10. Did Marcia do the right thing in showing Catherine the long-lost letter from Jonathon that Ruby had intercepted? Would Catherine have been better off not knowing what Ruby had done?
11. After learning the truth about Jonathon, Catherine reacts by getting rid of Ruby's clothes. Why does she do that, and why does she later soften her feelings and conclude that she can't hate Ruby after all?
12. How does learning about Ruby's betrayal make Catherine conclude that it's time to stop living in the past? Is this newfound knowledge what convinces her to go into business with Tom? Or do you think she would have done it anyway?
13. Just when things are going well for Catherine, she experiences a dangerous fall on the ice that could have potentially taken her life. Does Catherine's injury prove that Bill was right to insist that she should no longer live alone? Or is Catherine right to inform him that she'll be out of the nursing home and back to her gardening by spring?
14. Professor Amundsen introduces Catherine to the idea of family fiction. Do you think this would be a good hobby for Catherine to pursue? What do you think Catherine would get out of the experience of writing about her family?

15. When Jonathon asks Catherine to stay with him at Maple Crest, her reaction is to leave for two weeks to stay with Bill and Jennifer. Why does she do this? If she has loved Jonathon for all these years, why doesn't she jump at the chance to be with him?
16. Jennifer frames Catherine's choice a decision between Tom and Jonathon, but Catherine insists she doesn't need a man to make her happy. What does she need to be happy?
17. Catherine tells Bill that she needs more than memories to live. She needs friends, and she needs a purpose. How did she reach this realization? How does this realization help her make her decision between staying with Jonathon or moving back home?