

For Bookclubs

Thank you for choosing STARS OVER CLEAR LAKE as your book club read. The following questions may help guide your discussion.

I'm available for book club guest appearances, either in person (if local) or by Skype. If you're interested, send me an email at lorettaellsworth@gmail.com

Stars Over Clear Lake Discussion Guide

1. The book evokes the fear that people felt about German POWs, yet some people became friends with the Germans while they were in the U.S. How does that reflect the culture of that time, and is it relevant to our society today?
2. One of the themes of the book is secrets. What are some of the secrets kept by the different characters, and how does it affect their relationships?
3. The story evokes a strong sense of place, both in North Iowa and in the Surf Ballroom. How does this sense of place shape the narrative? How does it echo the internal conflicts of Lorraine?
4. Clear Lake is a real town in North Iowa and the Surf Ballroom is a cultural icon. Why do you think the author used a real-life ballroom? What are some of the benefits and disadvantages in using existing places and buildings in a novel?
5. How does the author use the music of the time period to add atmosphere to the novel?
6. The book explores mother-daughter relationships. How does Lorraine's relationship with her mother shape her future relationship with her own daughter?
7. How does Lorraine's revelation about Daisy's father at the end of the novel change Daisy's view of her own heritage?
8. Another theme is following your dreams. How did societal expectations make Lorraine's decisions more difficult?
9. Lorraine's mother suffered from depression. How has medicine and culture changed in treating this today compared to the 1940s?
10. What sacrifices do the characters make in the novel? Do you agree with their sacrifices, or would you do things differently?