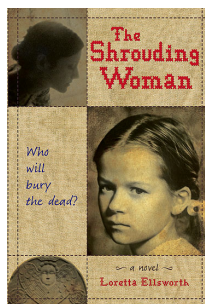
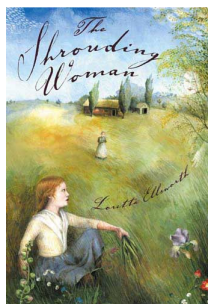


Discussion Guide for *The Shrouding Woman*



“Gently breaks new ground for children in removing some of the mystery from what some view as our last remaining obscenity, death” –School Library Journal

“This is a magnificent debut from an author who writes with a tender heart.” – Beverly Fahey, Children’s Literature



Before you read the book:

Why is this book called ‘The Shrouding Woman’? What do you think a shrouding woman is?

Locate Caledonia, Minnesota on a map. To imagine what life is like in 1879, read a copy of a newspaper from that year. Discuss how people lived back then and how their newspaper compares with newspapers of today.

Have you ever experienced the death of someone close to you? What helped you to get through that difficult time?

First Chapter

What does Evie know about Aunt Flo? What is your first impression of her?

How would you make someone feel welcome in your home?

The box

What do you think is inside the mysterious box that Aunt Flo keeps under her bed? Do you have a mysterious box of your own, one that you keep special things in? Illustrate what your special box would look like if you had one.

Searching for Twigs

What places do you like to go for a picnic? Have you ever been on a swinging bridge, and if so, would you feel scared if someone shook it? How does Aunt Flo plan to use the twigs she is collecting? Why do you think they are shaped like a 'y'?

The Storm

What notion of Aunt Flo is changed for Evie during the storm?

The Funeral

What fears does Evie face when she attends Mr. Severson's funeral? Why does Edward ask Evie if she will become a shrouding woman, too?

The Custom

What does Evie find out about the custom of shrouding from Aunt Flo? Evie empties the butter churn and blames it on her sister, then feels bad about it. Are there times when you've done something and felt bad about it later?

Stealing the Box

Why does Evie decide to steal Aunt Flo's box? What happens to the box?

Shrouding Duties

What does Evie discover about shrouding when she accompanies her Aunt Flo? Why do you think she cries afterwards?

A Shrouding Assistant

What talent does Evie discover in herself? Why does she decide to become Aunt Flo's assistant? Do you think you might have any undiscovered talents? Are there any abilities that your relatives have that you also possess?

The Tradition

How have Evie's feelings changed over the course of the year? How does the garden reflect the changes?