

Discussion questions for *WHISTLING IN THE DARK*

1. Did the book transport you back to the 50's? Share some of your best or worst memories of that time. Or of your own childhood in the 60's, 70's or beyond.
2. Young women are treated differently now than they were back then. They're encouraged to have careers. To take care of themselves financially. To stand on their own two feet. Back in the 50's, a girl's primary goal was to find a man to take care of her. How do you think these changing mores have affected women? Are these changes all positive? If not, what are the negatives?
3. Sally and Troo forge a bond based on loss and guilt. Do you have any relationships/friendships like this?
4. Sally and Troo experienced a deep sense of abandonment after the death of their Daddy. They manifested that sense of loss differently. How do you think the loss of a parent at any early stage of a child's life affects their emotional growth?
5. After her husband's death, Mother decided the only way to put food on the table was to marry Hall, a man she had little or no feelings for. What would you do if you found yourself in her position?
6. Sally is the product of an adulterous affair. Did you feel differently about her when this was revealed?
7. Mother hid her affair with Dave Rasmussen from her husband and children. Some women, after committing such an indiscretion, would confess and beg for forgiveness. What would you do?
8. Would you have a relationship with your sibling if they weren't your family?
9. The story touches upon teenage pregnancy when Sally discovers that her next door neighbor, Dottie Kenfield, was sent away to have her baby. Nowadays young girls are allowed to continue high school and in fact, many schools provide child care. Do you think this glamorizes teen

pregnancy? Why do you think times have changed in regard to this once social taboo? What would you do if your teenage daughter became pregnant?

10. Troo appears to take Sally's "mothering" in her stride. Why do you think that is?

11. Fear is a main theme of the book. Fear of our feelings. Fear of what other people think. Fear of the unknown. What are you afraid of?

12. When Sally finally accepts that Rasmussen is her birth father, she expresses a sense of relief that "she finally looks like someone." Yet, she must now come to terms again with the loss of her Daddy. Much of life is a two-edged sword. Can you recall ever feeling this way?

13. Mr. Gary and Father Jim were gay. Did you find their relationship touching in any way?

14. Sally's devotion to Sampson was clearly based on the memories she had of her Daddy. Did you find this disturbing in any way?

15. At the end of the book, Sally appears to have come to terms with her Daddy's death. Have you ever lost someone very dear to you? How did you handle it?