



Literature Circle Discussion Questions

1. Jenna gives us access to her internal dialogue throughout the story. What allows you to remain in tune to your own internal dialogue? What does our internal dialogue sometimes say about ourselves that our spoken words do not?
2. The apple tree in Jenna's courtyard took on a level of symbolism far beyond a literal tree. What other objects, settings, or dialogue within the story contain symbolism beyond the literal sense? How does that symbolism influence you as a reader?
3. Using examples from the text, justify Valerie's original attraction to Daryl. Afterward, using examples from the text, justify Valerie's eventual attraction to Mr. Sansom. Are there any similarities? Any differences?
4. Do you know your school's emergency procedures? Take your discussion beyond the *actions* taken during an emergency to *why* you believe the leaders or your school chose those actions to be taken.
5. Jenna believes she is in love with Mr. Sansom. Mr. Sansom and Jenna's mother believe it is simple adolescent infatuation. Is there a difference between love and infatuation? If so, what is the difference?
6. Has there ever been a Mr. Sansom in your life—a teacher who takes an interest in you as a person as well as a student? Discuss this person with your group. How did this person affect your life?
7. Alan Fenstermacher is the unexpected hero of this story. Describe how Alan defies the traditional definition of the word *hero*. What can Alan teach us about unconditional kindness?
8. Do you believe love, or anything else for that matter, can be O.Y.L.? In your opinion, are there fruits that will always dangle just beyond our grasp?