

The Book Charmer

by Karen Hawkins



Book Club Guide

1. The first book to speak to Sarah Dove is an old journal written by her ancestor, fourteen-year-old Charlotte Dove, whose family moved to North Carolina from Massachusetts in 1702 and founded Dove Pond. What did the old leather journal want to share with Sarah?
2. Later, as the town librarian, Sarah Dove uses her gift to place the perfect book into the hands of the reader who needs it the most. Has anyone ever shared a book with you that was particularly appropriate for that moment in your life? What book was it? How did it help? If you had the opportunity to give a book to someone that you love in the hopes it would help them, what book would it be?
3. As children, Grace Wheeler and her sister Hannah bounced from foster home to foster home until finally landing with Mama G. How did Grace cope with this uncertainty? How was it different from the way Hannah coped?
4. Much of *The Book Charmer* centers around the definition of “family.” What was Grace’s view versus Sarah’s? How has your own definition of the word “family” changed since you were a child.
5. Eighteen years later, after the death of her sister, Hannah, Grace and Mama G move to Dove Pond with Hannah’s eight-year-old daughter, Daisy. They are all reeling from the changes caused by Hannah’s death and Mama G’s recent diagnosis. Why did Grace view this move as temporary? Are her expectations based in reality? In what way are they colored by the insecurities of her childhood?
6. Veteran Travis Parker is healing from his own wounds, both inside and out. Over the course of our story, he and Mama G bond as she is losing her memories while his memories haunt him. What does Trav see in Mama G that appeals to him? Why do you think he finally let her cut his hair?
7. Until newcomer Grace arrived, the Dove Pond Social Club had come to believe that their goal was not to plan the best festival ever, but to “check the boxes” and mimic last year’s effort. This sort of stale, as-is thinking isn’t a rare event for committee structures. Have you ever planned something as a group where this happened? Could a newcomer who didn’t know the rules change things?
8. Because of Grace’s background in business, she instantly sees opportunities to sell Dove

Pond to new businesses. But what does she fail to take into account? What does she learn when she visits the town archives?

9. Sarah sent Grace the book *Little Women*. Throughout the story, the old book echoes various thoughts Grace has about her new situation. Why do you think *Little Women* was the right book for Grace? What lessons did the book teach her?
10. Sarah desperately needs to convince Grace to stay in Dove Pond and eventually, with the help of the entire town, this happens. Are you a member of a community? What are the costs to becoming an active member of a close-knit community? What are the benefits?