

The Song of the Lark **Book Club Discussion Questions**



Questions:

1. Compare the Thea you know from the first two parts of the book to the Thea from the final parts of the novel. In what ways has she changed, and in what ways has she remained the same?
2. Some critics have characterized Thea as indulgent and self-centered. Is this a fair assessment of her character?
3. Discuss the town's treatment of "the tramp." What does the town's behavior say about group behavior? What does the tramp's response say about human nature?
4. What role does landscape play in this novel? In what ways does Cather use it as a character?
5. Consider the beginnings and separations in the novel. How do these two ideas shape the lives of individual people? Is separation necessary for the growth of an individual?
6. Marriages are a theme to be explored in the book. What are the models of marriage as an institution that Thea sees? Is domesticity the enemy of artistry?
7. Discuss the complexities of Dr. Archie's feelings for Thea. Did the relationship develop as you expected or hoped that it would?
8. Why *is* romance so difficult for Thea?
9. When Spanish Johnny reappears at the theater doors at the end of the novel, he sees Thea but does not speak to her. Why? Is this a statement on class, race, propriety or culture?
10. Consider the aspects of "high art" such as opera and the fine arts, and "low art" such as folk music, china painting, or other crafts. What does *The Song of the Lark* have to say about the relative merits of each?
11. The painting *The Song of the Lark* by Jules Breton inspired the title of the novel. How is the painting pertinent to the story?
12. What is the price of fame, and does Thea think it's too high?
13. Discuss Thea's awakening in Panther Canyon. What spurs her realizations? What about the canyon is crucial to her development as an artist?