

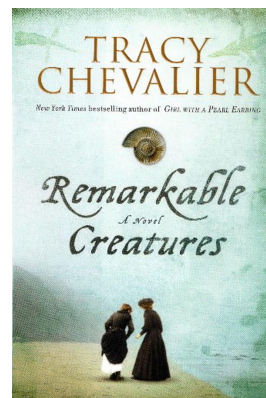


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Discussion Questions

Remarkable Creatures

Tracy Chevalier



1. Both of the main characters are attracted to fossil hunting, although it is not a “ladylike pursuit” at this time in history. How does the motivation differ for Mary and for Elizabeth as a result of their status in society?
2. How would you describe Mary and Elizabeth’s relationship: mother/daughter, sisters, or something else? Were you surprised by their friendship?
3. Who would you say had more freedom to do what they wanted, Mary or Elizabeth?
4. Why do you think the author made the women the fossil hunters and the men just fossil collectors? Did you think that it was unfair that society had such restrictions on scientific discoveries and papers by only allowing men in this realm?
5. Did you like the switch in character voices in the chapters? Was this helpful in understanding the motives and behaviors that society imposed on the women that predisposed them to act accordingly?
6. At different points in the novel, both Mary and Elizabeth have reason to think they themselves might become fossils. What did each woman mean by that?
7. How does Colonel Birch come between the ladies? What do you think his motives were?
8. Why does Elizabeth undertake the journey to London? Do you think Mary was surprised that Elizabeth undertook the journey on her behalf?
9. Learning of Elizabeth’s illness, Mary’s insightful thoughts show the depth of her despair; “It seemed whenever I found something, I lost something else.” What do you think she meant by this?
10. The last chapter entitled, “Silent Together” gives further insight into Mary and Elizabeth’s relationship. What is your opinion on the ending of this book?