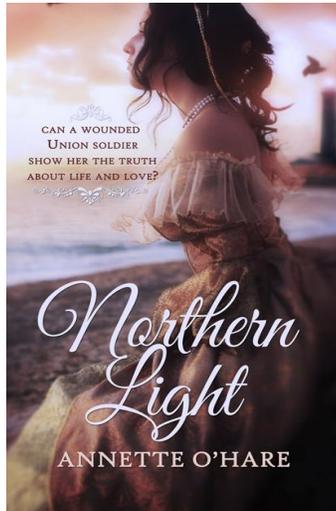


Discussion Questions



NORTHERN LIGHT

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About the Book

Civil War has robbed Margaret Logan of all she holds dear, including her beloved New Orleans home and her fiancé. When her family moves to the desolate Bolivar Peninsula to manage a lighthouse that is no longer there, all her hopes for a normal future are dashed.

Her world is rocked once again when a wounded Yankee soldier washes ashore needing her help. Despite her contempt for the North, Margaret falls in love with Thomas Murphy. As their love blooms, Margaret's sister is overcome with neurosis, and her mind slowly slips away. Bitterness, psychosis and depression yield a decision fueled by contempt. Will one fatal choice cause Margaret to lose the man she loves and condemn Thomas to death?

TITLE: Northern Light
Discussion:

Question 1: The lighthouse is symbolic in this story. The book's thematic Bible verse is Psalm 43:3a, O send out Thy light and Thy truth: let them lead me. Can you point out some of the symbolism associated with the lighthouse?

Answer 1: At the beginning of the book the Logan's find that the lighthouse has been completely dismantled and taken away because of the war. Margaret's life is symbolic of the lighthouse in that everything precious to her has been taken away because of the war. At the end of the book the old lighthouse is replaced with a new one. This is symbolic of Margaret's old life of bitterness and loss being replaced with one filled with joy.

Question 2: Looking again at the thematic Bible verse (Psalm 43:3a, O send out Thy light and Thy truth: let them lead me) reveals another aspect of Margaret's spiritual journey. She is searching for truth concerning the war and slavery. She doesn't find the answer until she seeks God's light and His truth. Other verses showing Jesus and God as light are, John 8:12 and Psalm 27:1. Take a moment and read these two passages. Discuss what these verses mean to you.

Answer 2: Discussion only.

Question 3: According to some Southerners, the Civil War was fought not only to free the slaves, but for other reasons as well. Some of the reasons are pointed out in the book. Can you remember what they were?

Answer 3: States rights, Southerners weren't allowed to sell their products anywhere but the North, the North taxed goods so high that Southerners couldn't afford them.

Question 4: Thomas and his family left Ireland because of the devastation caused by the Potato Famine. People are still flocking to the United States to this day. What are some reasons why they want to live here?

Answer 4: Human rights, religious freedom, no civil war, a better education, no communism, freedom,

Question 5: The Civil War was the deadliest war in United States History. More than 600,000 soldiers died, but at least 400,000 of them died of disease and accidental death. What is the greatest cause of fatalities of U.S. service men today and why? (Hint: It's a minor theme in the book)

Answer 5: A November 2013, CNN report states that suicide rates among U.S. veterans may be more than 22 a day. According to a 2012 report by NPR.org, the number of suicide deaths in the U.S. military surged to a record 349 last year – more than the 295 Americans who died fighting in Afghanistan in 2012.

Question 6: In honor of Thomas' heritage, the Logan family celebrate Advent for the first time. What are some of the ways you and your family celebrate the holy days?

Answer 6: Discussion only.

Question 7: In chapter eight, Thomas talks about the man who wrote Amazing Grace. John Newton worked with slave traders and got into considerable trouble. Later in life Newton was captain of his own slave ship. As the story goes, a violent storm came up and Newton barely escaped with his life. Reflecting on what happened, he penned the words to the famous song. He was a changed man. Do you know of anyone who exchanged a bad life for good?

Answer 7: Franklin Graham, son of evangelist, Billy Graham was a self-proclaimed bad boy before turning his life over to God. Georgia Durante was a getaway driver for the mob before starting a stunt-driving company. Nixon aide, Charles Colson spent a year in prison because of Watergate before starting Prison Fellowship.

Question 8: Margaret's sister, Elizabeth does a terrible thing that forces Thomas to leave the Logan home. Margaret is alone once again. It takes a long time, but eventually Margaret finds it in her heart to forgive her sister. Have you ever had to forgive someone for a terrible wrong done against you?

Answer 8: Discussion only.

Question 9: When Ensign Miller arrives and tells the Logans that the North won the war and that Lincoln was assassinated, why do you think they were doubtful of him?

Answer 9 Even though Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation went into effect January 1, 1863, the news didn't reach the Texas coast until June 19th of 1865. Juneteenth is still celebrated in Texas.

Question 10: Ensign Miller offers Mr. Logan a job as head lightkeeper for the new lighthouse and gives him money for expenses. Mr. Logan and his wife immediately realize that God is providing the money needed to get their daughter, Elizabeth the medical help she needs. Has there been a time in your life when God gave you exactly what you needed at just the right time?

Answer 10: Discussion only.

