

Beyond All Dreams Discussion Questions

- 1) Is love at first sight possible? Luke's experience with the opera singer taught him about infatuation, so he was instinctively suspicious of the feeling. How can one determine if one is in love, or merely infatuated?
- 2) Anna and Neville have such a long and enduring friendship that most people assumed they would eventually get married. Do you believe such an entirely platonic friendship between a man and a woman is possible? What are the advantages of being friends before becoming romantically involved?
- 3) Luke grew up with an abusive father and fears becoming an abuser himself. Why does this pattern of destructive behavior often get handed down to children? What patterns of behavior (both positive and negative) have you inherited from your own parents?
- 4) Throughout the book, Anna is able to forgive those who have sinned against her, while Luke is not. What power has Luke surrendered to his enemies by continuing to hold grudges? Are there some sins that can't be forgiven?
- 5) Both Luke and Julia loved their father even though they feared him. What accounts for this?
- 6) Is war always wrong?
- 7) Both Anna and Neville carry scars from their painful years in school, but so does their sometimes-tormentor, Eliza Sharpe. Why do so many people look back on their school years as difficult?
- 8) Why was Neville reluctant to tell Anna of his relationship with Mrs. Norquist? Have you ever been in a platonic relationship and felt "left behind" when your friend became romantically involved with someone?
- 9) At one point, Luke tells his nephew that the boy's passion for art is a gift from God, "but we don't know what form it will take yet. If you don't make it as a painter, perhaps you'll be a great teacher. Or a museum curator. Maybe you'll become a rich industrialist and fund a museum. Just don't limit yourself by thinking you already know God's purpose for you." Did you have any childhood dreams that did not come true but were funneled toward another worthy goal?
- 10) Anna and Luke are a case of "opposites attract." What are the advantages and problems of such a relationship? Would Anna have been better off married to Neville?
- 11) Bitter political rivalries are nothing new in Washington. Luke and the Speaker of the House genuinely loathe one another for years before they unite to work toward a common cause. Is it possible to have serious disagreements about policy or social matters without demonizing one another? How can this be accomplished?