

A Great Catch Discussion Questions/ Lorna Seilstad

1. Lilly claims people do everything for the same reason—“To love and be loved.” Do you agree? Why or why not?
2. Emily says her grandmother has often told her, “It’s one thing to say you support something. It’s something else altogether to fight for it.” Apply this to our world today. Are there causes you support but aren’t actively fighting? What makes a person willing to champion a cause?
3. Sibling relationships affect us all. Martin found it hard to admit to himself that Emily was an adult. Nathan wanted Carter to follow in his footsteps. How did Emily and Carter’s sibling relationship affect them? What roll has birth order played in your life? Has your relationship changed with your siblings with time? If you have children, how did you discourage sibling rivalry?
4. In his sermon, Brother Fossen said, “If you don’t let the Lord make your paths straight, you’ll spend your life running in circles.” How does this fit with the first verse given in the book— Proverbs 3:6 “In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct thy paths”? How did Emily demonstrate the running in circles concept? Do you ever feel like you are running in circles? Why do you think you allow that to happen?
5. Cisterns were large wells dug to collect rain water. If there was a crack, the water might remain for a little while, but then leak out. Why did this make a good symbol for Emily’s life? Are we, as a society, collecting rain in broken cisterns? Why or why not?
6. One of the themes of *A Great Catch* was significance. How did Emily’s quest for finding her place in the world affect her choices?
7. Grandma Kate gave Emily a lot of advice in *A Great Catch*. Which of her words of wisdom did you appreciate the most? Have you received any special words of wisdom from your own grandparents?
8. What qualities about Aunt Ethel and Aunt Millie did you enjoy most? Which woman would you want for an aunt? Do you have any eccentric relatives in your family? What did you think of way Emily handled them?
9. Women have enjoyed the right to vote for over 75 years now. What did you learn about or see differently about the suffrage fight while reading *A Great Catch*? Why was the right to vote so important for women? If you had lived in 1901, do you think you would have been a suffragist? Why or why not?
10. Emily definitely struggled with clumsiness. Do you believe this was because of her perception of herself or because of an actual problem with gracefulness? How did this “flaw” affect Emily? Have you struggled with any similar problems? How can you relate to her embarrassing moments?

Refreshment Ideas: The aunts offer Emily a slice of Prune Cake. On the next page is my grandmother’s recipe for the cake. You can also serve lemon drops since Emily chokes on one during a ride with Carter.

### ***Grandma Pearl's Prune Cake***

#### Cake:

5 eggs, beaten	1 tsp. baking powder
2/14 C. sugar	1 tsp. soda
1 1/2 C. vegetable oil	1 tsp. salt
3 C. Flour	1 1/2 tsp. nutmeg
1 1/2 C. buttermilk	1 tsp. cinnamon
1 C. nuts of choice	1/2 tsp. allspice
1 1/2 C. pitted prunes, chopped	

#### Sauce:

3/4 C. buttermilk  
1/2 C. butter  
1 1/2 C. sugar  
2 T. corn syrup  
3/4 tsp. soda  
2 tsp. vanilla

Mix all ingredients for cake. Pour in greased Bundt pan (not what grandma used, but it works well). Bake at 350 degrees for 35 min. Let rest, then remove from pan. Pour sauce over cake while still warm. For sauce, combine ingredients and bring to boil. Cook 5 to 10 min. Pour over warm cake.