



Come What May

The Iceberg Trilogy 2

Discussion Topics for Reading Groups & Book Clubs

1. After reading *Come What May* which character's life story did you find the most tragic – Rebecca's, Gene's, Morton's, Jonathan's or Sonny's. And why?
2. Wyatt's huskies were pivotal to Morton's healing: "The dogs, somehow, were different. They seemed to open the secret passage to Morton's voice." Discuss Morton's transformation through his beloved huskies and any personal experiences you've had with animals being a catalyst for emotional healing or personal growth?
3. In the summer of 1939 Rebecca lost both her husband and her youngest son, Joel. If she had only lost one of them through that tragedy do you think her mourning journey would have been any different? Would you have been like Rebecca and decided not to know the details of their death or would you needed to have known?
4. On their trip north, Gene says to Jonathan: 'If it weren't for those icebergs our father and brother would still be alive.' Blame is never spoken about in this novel but it is there as an undercurrent and a key element to Rebecca's prolonged mourning. Do you think they should have cleared the air on those feelings of blame?
5. *Come What May* was set during a time when TB and polio were still major diseases. In fact, a polio vaccine was not available to 1962. These two illnesses required months, often years of hospitalisation and often the victim's quality of life is compromised forever more. Did *Come What May* give you any insight into the effects of these diseases and why vaccination is critical? Discuss.
6. What other elements of their trip north in 1951 did you find of interest and why?

7. Why do you think Sonny waited ten years for Gene to be ready for their relationship? He gave some reasons in the novel – did these resonate with you or did you think there were other factors?
8. Gene suffered from a mix of mental health issues throughout *Come What May*. From post-traumatic stress disorders, melancholia, depression, postnatal depression, anxiety disorders through to psychotic disorders (hallucinations). Given everything she struggled with, what did you think of her as a character?
9. Do you think Gene did the right thing when she fled from Freshwater in 1969, trying to give Sonny a clean start in life? Discuss.
10. Do you think Gene should have stayed in contact with Sonny in the intervening years while she lived in Vancouver? Did she do the right thing coming back? Discuss.
11. Do you think Sonny did the right thing by setting a two-year time period for Gene to prove herself capable of being a good and reliable parent? Did that length of time seem reasonable to you or a bit extreme?
12. We only see a little bit of Lindsay and Shane in this novel. Do you think they ever thought about their Mom, Gene? What do you think those thoughts might be?
13. Due to various reasons, Gene has a fraught relationship with her family. Towards the end of the novel, Gene tells Sonny: ‘Walking away as I did was an all or nothing deal. I didn’t want to have them in my life and not you three. I wouldn’t have been able to do it. I must be a failure in their eyes on so many levels. Even now.’ Could you empathise with her reasoning or do you think there were other elements that kept her from reaching out to her mother and siblings?
14. Which character would you have liked to have known more about, seen more of in the story? Why?
15. What were the signature moments for you in this novel? Did this book make you cry? If so, in what parts and why?

Please note there is an author interview with Sherryl on her website: www.sherrylcaulfield.com under *Come What May* that explores more questions.

If you have a question you’d like Sherryl to answer, please email her at: info@sherrylcaulfield.com

Or send her a message via her Facebook page: www.facebook.com/SherrylCaulfieldAuthor