

Questions for Discussion

What is “a Cape Cod cottage”? The idea and its connotations are deeply important to Sally. Why does she cling to this vision throughout her life? Does some kind of Cape Cod mystique exist? What is it?

Theodore Roosevelt once wrote, referring to his Long Island home, “I wonder if you will ever know how much I love Sagamore Hill.” How does a summer cottage or escape place come to matter so deeply to people? Such a place is often a sign of wealth or privilege. Can it be deserved or shared?

Describing herself when she was about to marry into the Buffington family, Sally wrote, “No one else regarded the world quite the way I did.” Did she change over the years, or remain fundamentally the same person?

How does Sally’s concept of family and relationships change as she lives through the years of visiting Craigville? Can an in-law (mother or father) influence the next generation as profoundly as a birth parent?

Sally’s encounters with Lois Buffington reflect changes in women’s lives in the twentieth century. Do you think Lois could have found a way to use her professional training? How did life at the cottage highlight the choices she and Sally had made?

Food and cooking are pretty important at Craigville. But what if you didn’t like blueberry pie? Or the time and work such a pie requires? How does a cook’s work and style influence daily life around her or him? How would you describe Sally’s style?

In *One Old Chair*, Sally says, “. . . if you had taken a picture, you knew something. You had taken command of the situation.” Why does she feel that way? Why was photography so important to her at Craigville?

Sally writes of nature as her “escape from all these human complications into a world I conceive entirely in my own terms.” Is that all she finds there? What do you find in the natural world? Do you have to be alone to experience it?

Why does it take Sally so long to write the book and gain the confidence to present herself?