

Discussion Questions for *Miss Julia Speaks Her Mind* by Ann B. Ross

(Many questions taken or adapted from <http://www.harpercollins.com/author/authorExtra.aspx?isbn13=9780688177751&displayType=readingGuide>)

1. Did you like the book? If so, why? If not, why not?
2. Did you like the characters? Did you find them believable? Who was your favorite? Least favorite?
3. Did you find the dialog in the story realistic?
4. What did you think of the plot line development? How credible did the author make the plot? Did the plot take turns you did not expect, or did you find it predictable?
5. Miss Julia remarks to Deputy Bates, “Don’t you know it’s always the wife’s fault if a man strays? . . . There’s always something the wife’s doing, or not doing, that pushes a man over the brink. That’s just the way it is.” Do you think she believes this, or is she merely commenting on a societal prejudice? Is she accurately predicting what the town will think of her husband’s infidelity?
6. How well does Miss Julia know herself? Is she a reliable narrator? How does the author use point of view and tone to develop Julia’s character?
7. What does Julia learn about her late husband as a result of his death? Why do you think her revelations about his personality have come so late in their relationship?
8. The author’s portrait of Miss Julia’s church and its leadership is far from flattering, yet religion plays a big part in Julia’s life. Is there any difference between Pastor Ledbetter’s deceptions and those of Brother Vern? What is Miss Julia looking for in religion that neither of these men can provide?
9. Julia goes from being terribly concerned about what the townspeople will think of her connection to Little Lloyd to taking a very defiant stance about the choices she has made. What is she risking by refusing to give in to the town’s prejudice? What is she gaining?
10. How does Julia’s relationship with Little Lloyd change over the course of the novel? What signs are we given of Julia’s affection for the boy?
11. How do you think you would react in Miss Julia’s situation? Would you take in Little Lloyd? Would you befriend Hazel Marie?
12. Why does Miss Julia develop strong friendships with Lillian and Hazel Marie? What do these very different women have in common, and what does their affection for each other reveal about them?
13. What has Julia learned about life and love by the end of the novel? How have the obstacles she’s overcome made her stronger and wiser?
14. Do you think Ross’s portrait of a small Southern town is accurate? What aspects of Abbottsville and its residents ring true to you?
15. Any comments about the way the book ended?
16. Do you want to read the next book in the series?
17. Are there any questions you would like to ask?