

## I Capture the Castle — Discussion Questions

1. "I Capture the Castle" was first published in 1948. How might readers have responded differently to the novel at that time? How might their responses have been the same? Why does the novel continue to appeal to readers today as it did in 1948?
2. I Capture the Castle is told through Cassandra's entries in her journals, an exercise she has undertaken in order to teach herself how to write. Why do you think Dodie Smith chose the form of the diary to tell the story of Cassandra and the Mortmain family?
3. Mortmain's celebrated novel is described as a literary breakthrough and a predecessor to James Joyce. What do you imagine Jacob Wrestling to be about?
4. As a voracious reader, Cassandra compares her situation to that of the Bennets in *Pride and Prejudice*. How would you compare the Mortmain sisters with the Bennet sisters?
5. Why does Mortmain encourage Cassandra to be brisk with Stephen? What does the book say about class in mid twentieth century England?
6. What is the meaning of the book's title?
7. Cassandra is fascinated by the Cottons and their American mannerisms, and the Cottons are fascinated by the Mortmains. What does the book say about English preconceptions of Americans and vice versa?
8. How does the novel reflect society's changing views toward women during the first half of the century? How do the women view the opportunities open to them? Consider Cassandra, Rose, Topaz, Mrs. Cotton, and Mrs. Fox Cotton.
9. Over the course of the novel, Cassandra becomes less a child and more a young woman. How is this a coming of age story?