

BOOK GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

For

Tell Me About Orchard Hollow

by Lin Stepp

1. What signs and mannerisms show that Jenna Howell is not a happy, confident woman at the beginning of this book? What factors in her life might have contributed to this?
2. How does Jenna learn about her husband Elliott's infidelity? What is her response? How is it different from her friend Carla's response?
3. Who is Sam Oliver and how has he become a presence in Jenna's life? How does Sam become a help to Jenna after Elliott's betrayal? Whose idea is it for Jenna to go to Orchard Hollow—and why?
4. How do Boyce Hart and Jenna first meet? Despite the attraction between them, why is it not a good time for either of them to begin a relationship?
5. Boyce and Jenna argue over Jenna working at the gallery. What reasons does Boyce give Jenna as to why work might be a help to her? Do you agree with his philosophy?
6. Jenna and her New York friends perpetrate an extensive plan of deception so Jenna can get away on her own to deal with her problems. Do you believe it is okay to tell lies or to stretch the truth in certain instances? How did Jenna's deceptions both help and hurt?

7. Jenna has two female friends in this book—Carla in New York and Charlotte in Townsend. How do both of these young women show loving friendship to Jenna? What do you think are the traits of a good friend?

8. Boyce tells Jenna the story of how he developed as an artist. What do you remember about his account? What hardships did Boyce have to overcome? How is the development of Jenna's art different from Boyce's? Why does she keep her work a secret in Townsend?

9. Jenna has obviously been in an abusive relationship but she has a hard time acknowledging and coming to terms with this. Why do you think that is? Why do you think women get into and often stay in abusive relationships?

10. What are Boyce's brother Charles and mother Ruth Hart's reactions to Jenna? Why do you think Ruth counseled her children that it was best not to marry people who have been divorced? How did she explain this to Boyce when he brought it up? Do you agree or disagree with her views?

11. Jenna admits at a point that she hates and avoids confrontation, but she gets angry with Boyce when he suggests she needs to do something to fix her life. How does he criticize the way she's been handling her life until now? How would Boyce like to see Jenna change?

12. Jenna comes from a wealthy background. How does living in Townsend teach her new understandings about money? What does Charlotte claim determines the true value of a person more than financial worth and status?

13. What event happened that forced Jenna to go back to New York earlier than planned? What do you think caused Elliott's actions at that time? What are the differences in how others see these events—Carla, Sam, Jenna's parents, Maury Berkowitz... even Elliott himself?

14. How does Jenna change while waiting for her divorce—in her outward life, her work, her values? Why does she start reading her Bible every day? How does that impact other areas of her life?

15. Boyce finds a way to stay in touch with Jenna through letters. Whose idea was this? When does Boyce break his promise about coming to New York to see Jenna and why? What happens? How does his visit affect Jenna?

16. How does Jenna handle it when Elliott shows up unexpectedly at Paludi's Restaurant before their divorce? How does this event and Jenna's recognition at Park Press show ways she has changed?

17. What happens at the end of this book when Jenna brings Sam back to Orchard Hollow for a visit? How has Boyce handled her absence? Why does he worry over Jenna's new ease and confidence? How do issues flare and then resolve for Boyce and Jenna's lives?

18. What did you like best about this book? Who were your favorite characters?