

BOOK CLUB DISCUSSION QUESTIONS – *DARK ENOUGH TO SEE THE STARS IN A JAMESTOWN SKY*

1. Why does a scallop shell continue to reappear? What do you think it symbolizes?
2. What do each of the three women—Joan, Maggie, and Tempie—bring to the group which helped some of them survive?
3. Do you think Elizabeth Mayhew was right—that it would be better to die than to live through the winter of James Town’s Starving Time?
4. Connie believes she awoke, one wintry January day, to the sound of Joan’s voice dictating a chapter to her. This chapter, “Like Wind I Go,” was not in Connie’s original plan for the book. Although Connie had already completed that section, she decided to add the new chapter. Do you believe this can happen? If it can, was it the character Joan, the real Joan, or someone else who spoke to her that morning?
5. Do you think “Like Wind I Go” adds anything to the story that may have been missing without it?
6. How do you think old Grace knew that Joan was planning to give her less food since her back was turned to Joan? Do you believe there might be something mystical about her, or did she simply guess?
7. What did Joan learn from the Paspahugh queen?
8. Do you believe it’s true, as Annie Laydon said, that “the men folk fight and the women folk bear the brunt”?
9. The typical characterization of Jamestown’s Starving Time is that the settlers were too lazy to plant corn or hunt deer, that they preferred to starve. Do you believe this is a fair portrayal of the reasons for the Starving Time?
10. If you were in Jamestown, would you leave, never to return, at the first opportunity? Or would you stay so that your time and money invested would amount to something? (No one was allowed to go home until 1617, six years after the ending of this novel.)