***The Love Story of Missy Carmichael* by Beth Morrey**

**Discussion Questions**

1. Did you like Missy Carmichael when you first met her? Why or why not? How about at the end?

2. Missy’s life is entirely transformed by her chance meeting with Sylvie and Angela. Why doesn’t Missy like Angela at first? Does Missy’s opinion change as she gets to know her? How do these two women reshape the way Missy understands her community?

3. Is there someone in your own life who has forced you to step out of your comfort zone? How did you feel about this person at first? Did your opinion change over time? What did you learn when you took a risk?

4. Why doesn’t Missy want to take Bobby? What changes? How does the dog help Missy to see her life differently?

5. Were you surprised by the choice Missy makes in 1956? Why doesn’t she tell Leo? How does this choice affect the rest of her life? What does she think about this choice now that she’s eighty?

6. Discuss Leo’s character. How does Missy see him? Do you think this is how others see him too? How did he change over the course of his marriage to Missy? Was he a good husband?

7. Missy thinks about the concept of *oikos* [p. 47]. What does this concept mean? Why is it important to Missy? Do you feel *oikos* plays a role in your own life? How do Sylvie, Angela, Otis, and Bobby help Missy to see her daughter in a new light? Is there someone in your own family you’ve struggled to connect with more than the rest? What might you do to reframe your relationship?

8. On p.41 Missy thinks, “Sometimes the loneliness was overpowering. Not just the immediate loneliness of living in a huge house on my own, loved ones far away, but a more abstract, galactic isolation.” What does she mean? Do you think there are different kinds of loneliness? Was there a time in your life when you felt this more abstract loneliness? What helped you to reconnect?

9. Why does Missy dread her seventy-ninth birthday? Do you agree with the saying that “age is just a number”? Why or why not? What do you think is different about looking for a fresh start in “old age”? How does Missy’s story change the way you think about finding love?