***I Capture the Castle* by Dodie Smith  
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 throughout I Capture the Castle as a literary breakthrough, a predecessor to James Joyce's work, and meriting the analysis of famous literary critics. Yet beyond a few spare descriptions, Smith tells us little about the actual story. What do you imagine Jacob Wrestling to be about?

4. A voracious reader, Cassandra compares her situation to that of the Bennets in Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice. How would you compare the situation of the Mortmain sisters to that of the Bennet sisters?

5. Why does Mortmain encourage Cassandra to be "brisk" with Stephen? What does I Capture the Castle 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, traditions and expressions, just as the Cottons are fascinated by the Mortmains and their English mannerisms, traditions and expressions. What does I Capture the Castle say about English preconceptions of Americans and America and vice versa?

8. How does I Capture the Castle reflect society's changing views toward women during the first half of the century? How do the women in the novel view the roles and opportunities open to them both in the family and in the world at large differently? Consider Cassandra, Rose, Topaz, Mrs. Cotton, and Mrs. Fox-Cotton.

9. Over the course of the novel, Cassandra comes to seem less a child "with a little green hand" and more a young woman. How is I Capture the Castle a story of Cassandra's coming of age?