

DAKOTA BLUES by Lynne M. Spreen

Discussion Questions for Readers

I hope you liked *Dakota Blues*. You may enjoy discussing it with your friends or book club. If so, here are some questions to get you started.

1. How did you experience the book - were you engaged immediately, or did it take you a while to "get into it"? How did you feel reading it—amused, sad, disturbed, confused, bored...?
2. How did you feel about Karen, the main character, or Frieda, the second-most-important one?
 - Why did they act the way they did?
 - Were their actions justified?
 - How did you see their relationship?
 - How has the past shaped their lives?
 - Do you admire or disapprove of them?
 - Do they remind you of people you know?
3. Did Karen and Frieda change by the end of the book? Did they grow or mature? Did they learn something about themselves and how the world works?
4. Was the plot engaging—did the story interest you? Did it seem like a fast-paced page-turner, or did you think the story unfolded slowly with a focus on character development? Were you surprised by the plot's complications, or did you find it predictable?
5. What main ideas—themes—does the author explore? (Consider the title, often a clue to a theme.) Does the author use symbols to reinforce the main ideas? Here are some examples: the open prairie, the wind or other weather aspects, the crumbling homesteads, and the mentioning of jets cutting across the sky at great altitude?
6. What passages strike you as insightful, even profound? Perhaps a bit of dialog that's funny or poignant or that encapsulates a character? Maybe there's a particular comment that hints at the book's main idea?
7. Was the ending satisfying to you? Why or why not, and if not, how might you change it?
8. If you could ask the author a question, what would you ask?
9. Has this novel changed your thinking in any way? Have you learned something new or been exposed to different ideas about people or a certain part of the world?
10. The author calls this book "midlife fiction," and describes it as an adult "coming-of-age" story. Did you enjoy reading about an older person, and would you be interested in more of that kind of story?

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