

1. Imagine that you are Daphne when Minerva Watts asks for help in the park. Would you dismiss the plea as crazy talk? When the other woman claimed to be Minerva's daughter, was Daphne relieved of any civic duty to help Minerva even though Minerva kept asking for help and said she was not the other woman's mother?
2. The loss of innocence had a profound effect on Daphne. How has her past affected her reaction to Minerva Watts? Is it natural for a person's resolve to fluctuate?
3. Vic said that lightning has struck twice for Daphne. How do the Mayfield tragedies ten and twenty years past continue to impact the central and peripheral characters?
4. Family stability is a recurring motif in *Orchids and Stone*. How do Lisa Preston's characters, particularly Daphne, attempt to compensate for the loss of a traditional family? Do the obstacles Vic and his children face differ in nature because of the reasons the two families are fractured? What about Daphne's parents?
5. Minerva Watts shows Daphne rare wild orchids. What does the orchid represent? Does anything else replace this symbol? What symbols and themes recur in *Orchids and Stone*?
6. Daphne's father felt his job was to keep his daughters safe. To what extent do traditional roles dictate life choices for many people? Do you know someone working in a field that is not traditionally occupied by people of that age, gender, or other stereotype? Can stepping beyond tradition be both empowering and limiting?
7. The suspension of Suzanne's murder case is echoed in other characters' lives and choices. In what ways do Daphne and her mother compensate, and are their methods successful? In what ways have other characters made, or not managed to make, healthy progress in their lives?
8. Daphne sometimes experiences tension because her best friend and her boyfriend do not get along well. How do relationships between friends impact other friends? What does the difference between Daphne and Suzanne's experience in this area reveal about the characters involved?

9. Daphne wants to know more about her sister's death. Vic tells her that there are some things we never get to know, and the retired homicide detective tells her that why is not a good question because there is no good reason for Suzanne's murder. Can an unanswerable question be a motivating force? Have you been influenced by a desire that could not be satisfied?

10. What do you think happened to Suzanne? Do you agree with Daphne's decision about the cold case investigators in the final chapter? How does the balance between letting things go and not letting things go impact our lives?

11. At the heart of *Orchids and Stone* is the question of how far one should go to help others. Discuss how different people in the story display varying levels of tenderness and aggression toward others, especially vulnerable characters. How often might we help or hinder strangers? Have you ever witnessed bystander syndrome?

12. How does the physical resolution scene at Daphne's mother's house in the second-to-last chapter comment on violence? Is it ever justifiable to threaten or assault someone? What if the person is helpless at the moment? What do responses to this idea reveal about disparate views on our humanity? What questions remain at the conclusion of *Orchids and Stone*?