

Belonging, home, and family are recurring themes in *If I Were You*. How do Eve and Audrey each experience these things throughout the book? How does their desire to belong and to have a home and a family motivate the decisions each young woman makes?

Which of the characters did you more easily identify with, Eve or Audrey? Why?

How do Eve and Audrey respond differently to adversity? To love? Give examples from the story. What accounts for their differences? Is it nature, nurture, or a combination of both?

The author uses Eve and Audrey to contrast the different classes in Britain prior to World War II. Describe the different lifestyles and expectations the girls and their families have. How does each girl grow and change as a result of their friendship?

Part of what Eve and Audrey learn is that the roles expected of them by society and their families don't necessarily reflect what God wants for them. What purpose might God have for your life that could differ from the expectations of society or family? What relationships has He placed in your life that have helped you - or could help you - to discover His plans for you?

The author also contrasts the way the war affected Britain with the way it affected America. Eve notes in 1946 that "America's prosperity astounded her. There were no piles of rubble where homes once stood, no queues for food, no shortages. Soldiers like Robert and Louis had returned home to civilian life as if the war had never happened." She tells Audrey that no one ever asks her about life during the war, that Americans seem to have the attitude that "the war is over and done with, and we'd all be better off to forget about it." In what ways is it helpful to be able to share about traumatic experiences we've had? Why is it hard for us to want to hear about the challenges others have faced? Think about times you've been on either side of this situation - how have you responded?

Eve blames Audrey's mother for the death of her own mother. Do you think Eve's reaction to her mother's death is fair? How does she eventually come to terms with it?

While urging Audrey to pay attention to her evolving feelings for Robert, Eve tells her, "The war has erased the rules and traditions we grew up with." What does she mean? Can you think of any examples from contemporary culture that are parallel to this? Have those changes been good or detrimental?

Eve is adamant about not having intimate relations with Alfie without the security of marriage, despite his pressure and her fears for his safety. What has changed by the time she meets Louis? Why does she make a different choice with him?

When Audrey visits her uncle in London in 1950, she debates whether to tell him the truth about her parentage. She decides not to, concluding that some secrets are better left hidden. Do you agree? How would you have handled the news Audrey had just received from her father?

Why does Audrey decide not to go to America when she first has the chance? What changes her mind later? Have you ever had second thoughts about a major life decision? Is it ever too late to change your path?

Were you surprised by Tom's advice to Louis to not tell his wife about his affair with Eve during the war? How is this different from Audrey's situation regarding her parents - or is it? Would the advice be different today from what it was in the mid-twentieth century?

What did you think of Eve's decision not to tell Louis about their child when she meets him again? Would you have done anything differently if you were in her situation?

Near the end of the book, Eve seems to believe that her circumstances are God's punishment for past actions--for her affair with Louis, for turning away from God. Have you or someone you care about ever felt that way? How can we know that God does not punish us for our sins once we have repented and accepted His forgiveness? If He's not punishing us, why do we still have to live with the consequences of our wrong choices?

Mrs. Vandenberg tells Eve, "There will be days when you'll be tempted to doubt that you are a new person, days when you'll be very hard on yourself. Especially as you face the painful consequences of your mistakes." Have you ever found it difficult to accept God's forgiveness? What has helped you?