



## DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. Were you surprised to learn that the American government was more progressive than the Canadian government in allowing single women to claim free homesteads? Why do you think the law was different in Canada?
2. Irene Parlby went on to have a huge impact on Canadian politics. Women in the three prairie provinces were the first to be enfranchised, but not until 1916. Discuss how women in Canada must have felt not to have a vote.
3. The Métis people of Red River, Manitoba were robbed of their land by an unscrupulous federal government. Were you aware of this historical injustice? Do you think their descendants are entitled to compensation?
4. Frank Oliver was a national figure who was the first newspaper publisher in Alberta and instrumental in the creation of Edmonton. However, he was an avowed racist and sexist. Do you believe that parks and monuments in his honor should be renamed?
5. The ignorance of European settlers who arrived in Canada with no knowledge of their new environment is staggering. Discuss what must have been their first impressions.
6. Winters were harsh on the prairie, with blizzards that lasted for days and temperatures falling to minus fifty Fahrenheit. What is the worst weather you have experienced?
7. The isolation of people living in homesteads sometimes literally drove them mad. Do you think you would be able to survive for months without any contact with another human being?
8. Almost every settler family lost a baby or young child, sometimes several of them. Do you think people were more hardened to grief and loss in the past than they are today?
9. How do you think the residents of Ladyville, including the children, changed and evolved during the course of their adventures?
10. What was the most memorable scene or twist in the story? Do you think the women were justified in hiding Hector's body?
11. How well did the author blend historical fact and fiction in this book? Did you find the book accurate and authentic? Did you learn something new about the time and place in which it is set?
12. What do you think happened to the characters after the book concluded? Were you surprised by the ending?
13. If you could ask the author one question, what would you ask? Elinor welcomes all questions, and answers every email!