



# Book Club in a Bag

## Discussion Questions

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### *The Stars are Fire* by Anita Shreve

1. The epigraph is a quote from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*: "Doubt thou the stars are fire; / Doubt thou the sun doth move; / Doubt truth to be a liar; / But never doubt I love." What does it mean? What does it have to do with the novel it introduces?
2. "Containerize, her own mother once told Grace, as if imparting the secret of sanity. Her mother meant children as well as dry goods." (pages 9-10) In what ways does Grace follow this advice? When does she disregard it?
3. Grace intends to seduce Gene on page 15, but the results are degrading and painful. If the novel were set in the present, might this be considered marital rape? How are things different now from in the 1940s?
4. Discuss Grace's relationship with Rosie. Why is this friendship so important to Grace? What function does Rosie serve in her life?
5. After the fire, after losing the baby, Grace believes Gene may have used the chaos as cover for him to leave the family. What makes her think this? Would she rather that he fled, or died fighting the fire?
6. Why do Matthew and Joan take in Grace and the children? How does their action help her to heal?
7. What do you think would have happened to Grace and the children if Marjorie hadn't found them?
8. Why do you think Merle hid her jewelry where she did? What would have happened to Grace and the children if Grace hadn't found it?
9. The novel ends on a serendipitous note. Did you find it satisfying?

The above questions were taken from Penguin Random House, Reader's Guide, and LitLovers  
[www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/228116/the-stars-are-fire-by-anita-shreve/9780385350907/readers-guide/](http://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/228116/the-stars-are-fire-by-anita-shreve/9780385350907/readers-guide/)  
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