



The Ties That Bind

Discussion Questions

1. Grace faces circumstances that threaten the unity of her family. Which challenge affects her most deeply, and how does it shape her decisions?
2. How does Grace change from the beginning of the novel to the end? Which experiences most influence her growth?
3. What does the title, *The Ties That Bind*, mean in relation to Grace's family relationships? Are those ties primarily sources of strength, obligation, or both?
4. How does the separation between family members in Cornwall and those who have gone to America affect the character's sense of identity and belonging?
5. The novel is set in 1830s Cornwall, a period marked by economic and social hardship. How does the historical setting influence the character's choices and opportunities?
6. In what ways does Grace balance the desire to contribute independently with the need for protection and support? Did you find her choices empowering, restrictive, or realistically complicated?

7. How are marriage, family duty, and commitment portrayed in the novel? Which relationships seem most successful, and why?
8. Several characters must respond to loss and grief. How do their different responses reveal their personalities and values?
9. What role does faith play in Grace's ability to endure hardship? Does the novel present faith as certainty, struggle, comfort, responsibility, or some combination of these?
10. How do the men who step into father-figure or protective roles affect the family? Are their actions motivated more by love, duty, tradition, or personal responsibility?
11. The exchange of personal letters helps move the story forward. What do the letters reveal that the characters' spoken conversations do not? How would the story feel different without them?
12. The novel draws on family history and sets up a continuing series. Which unanswered questions or unresolved relationships most make you interested in reading the next book?