

1. Lauren spends the better part of the novel steadily convincing herself she is nothing like the typical Dorough male heir. Does she have this right?
2. Near the end of the book Clarissa, Lauren's roommate, accuses Lauren of thinking she is better than everyone else. Why does Clarissa say that? Is it true?
3. The Shape of Mercy is about three distinct women: Mercy, Abigail and Lauren. What do these three women have in common? What separates them?
4. Why was it so important to Abigail that Mercy's diary be given to someone like Lauren, rather than be bequeathed to a museum? What difference did it make?
5. The diary's pages reveal a time and place of tragic historical significance. What emotions did reading the diary evoke within you? If faced with the same dilemma, confess or hang, which would you have chosen?
6. Mercy writes about a bird seeking shelter in her barn during the first few weeks of January 1692. What kind of symbolism does the bird offer?
7. Lauren describes Abigail's library as being suffocating, overly decorated and bursting with books – a room whose arrangement is in sharp contrast to the rest of the house. Why do you suppose this room was like that? Does Lauren's opinion of the library stay the same throughout the story?
8. When Lauren first meets Raul she assumes he is a member of the catering staff. Later she assumes he is a rich, upwardly mobile, pre-med student who cavalierly rolls up the sleeves of \$200 Armani shirts. What assumptions did you make about Raul?
9. Esperanza is convinced Graham wants to have Abigail declared unfit to manage her affairs. Why does she think that? Do you agree?
10. Were you satisfied with Tom Kimura's response to Lauren's visit and revelations about Abigail? Why or why not?
11. How might Abigail's life had been different if she had married Tom Kimura? What might have happened to the diary then?
12. If Lauren hadn't met Abigail and never read the diary, would her life be different?
13. When Raul takes Lauren up in the plane, she makes the comment, "I'm so small!" Raul tells her, "It's not always about you." What does he mean?
14. What do you think Lauren does after she graduates from college? What kind of future do you project for her career-wise?
15. John Peter tells Mercy shortly before her arrest that it "is easier to believe ill of someone than good." Is he right?
16. What do you think of Mercy shortly before her arrest that it "is easier to believe ill of someone than goo." Is he right?
17. The Shape of Mercy is a story about choices, stigma, and pre-conceived notions. Did you learn anything new about yourself in regard to these themes?