

### Discussion Questions for *Holding Up the Earth*

1. Hope reads/hears the stories of other young women who lived on Anna's farm. How were their lives different from hers? What restrictions (cultural rules) were placed on them because of the times they lived in? How did these restrictions affect their choices and expectations for the future?
2. How did the events in the young characters' lives help shape the women they would become?
3. Were you surprised, disappointed, or pleased with the way the author portrayed the young characters when they reappeared as adults?
4. When the novel ends, Hope is fifteen. What do you imagine her adult life will be like?
5. What are the recurring images/themes in the book (hints: gold ring, digging)? What did these images/themes add to the story?
6. The meadow remains unchanged through much of the book. What do you think might have been the author's reason for this?
7. Of the five young characters, which one was most like you? What personality traits do you share?
8. Of the five young characters, which one did you like best? Is your choice the same as in question seven. If not, why do you think that is?
9. Each of the five characters is written in her own voice. Why do you think the author chose this point of view? How might your involvement with the book have been different if the author had written from a third-person point of view, an outsider looking in?
10. Hope carries her backpack through much of the novel. Why was it so important to her? Why was it important to the novel?
11. In what way (large or small) might the experience of reading this book have changed the way you view your world, the way you view your life?