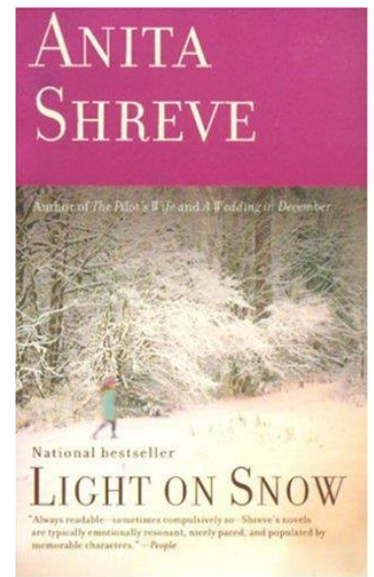


Light on Snow by Anita Shreve

1. Nicky notes near the beginning of *Light on Snow* that her father actively avoids civilization, yet when they find Baby Doris he quickly breaks out of his self-imposed exile to help save the abandoned infant. Why do you think he chooses to become so involved in this situation?
2. Discuss the relationship between Nicky and her father as the novel opens. In what ways is their relationship unique? In what ways does it reflect or subvert the traditional roles of parent and child?
3. The December days through which *Light on Snow* unfolds represent a rite of passage for Nicky in many ways. How is she ultimately influenced by what she experiences in these weeks? What does Nicky draw from her relationships with the various adults around her? Do you think they learn something from her as well?
4. A great deal about Robert Dillon's pre–New Hampshire life as a successful architect in New York City is revealed when his former colleagues visit his new home. Discuss the distinctions that the author draws between the Dillons' past and their present life.
5. Several scenes in the novel are focused on the preparation and consumption of food. Discuss the significance of these meals to the story.
6. How does Charlotte's arrival affect Robert and Nicky's interaction with the rest of the world?
7. After meeting Charlotte, Nicky's father struggles with the decision of whether or not to turn her in. Does he make a good choice in the end? Why?
8. Nicky's argument with her father after Charlotte leaves becomes a turning point in the novel. What does Nicky discover about herself in this passage? What does she learn about her father?
9. When Nicky overhears Charlotte's confession, she notes, "I want to believe that my father and I were meant to stumble across Baby Doris and give her a chance at life. But I'm not sure. I think about accidents and intersecting footsteps" (page 240). What does she mean by this observation? What role does fate or chance play in **Light on Snow**? Offer some examples.
10. The morning after the snowstorm, Nicky and Charlotte move a table into the kitchen. What does this action suggest? What exactly has changed?



11. "I know, as one does at twelve or eleven or ten, that I have witnessed something I shouldn't have witnessed, seen something I shouldn't have seen" (page 198). What has Nicky witnessed in this passage and how does what she has seen affect her?

12. Discuss the relationship between Nicky and Charlotte. How does each influence the other?

13. Do you think Charlotte's behavior with respect to her newborn child is justified? Do you think she takes appropriate responsibility for her actions in the end?

14. Although the novel's action takes place when Nicky is twelve years old, she is thirty when she recounts it. Why do you think the author has chosen to have a grown-up Nicky tell the story?