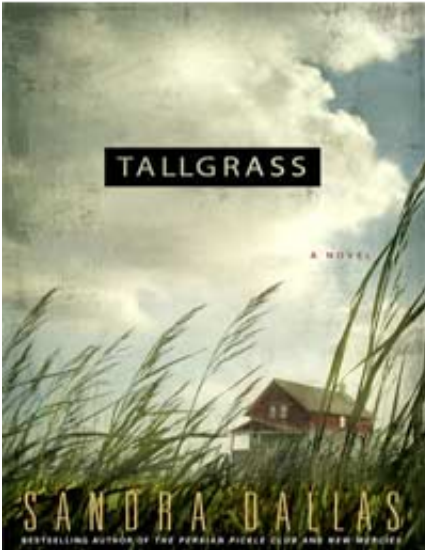


Reading Group Questions for books by SANDRA DALLAS



Tallgrass

1. Rennie's parents caution her frequently not to lie. How well do they succeed in following their own advice? How akin is the way they keep large secrets (that Marthalice was pregnant, that Mary is very sick) to lying to their friends and daughter? Why do they draw the line against pretending Daisy was married before she got pregnant, but conspire with the sheriff to dupe the town later?
2. *Tallgrass* shows Rennie dealing with tough issues: rape, murder, prejudice, and danger to her family. How much of her opinions seem to come from her parents, and how much from her own observations? What did you think of her still being afraid of "the Japs," even after she got to know and respect the Japanese her family had hired?
3. What is the importance of community to men and women in this book? Mary has the courage of her convictions and the love of her family, so why does she still care what other people think? Do you think she's right to care?
4. Mary Stroud didn't want the inmates of Tallgrass working on her land? Why?
5. There are two funerals in *Tallgrass*: Susan Reddick's and Harry Hirano's. How are they similar? How are they different? How does each change Rennie's view of the Japanese and her town?
6. In the 1940s, it was taken for granted that men acted and women talked. How much complicity do women have in the actions of their men: Mrs. Smith in her husband's late-night raid on Tallgrass; Mrs. Snow in her husband's descent into addiction and his treatment of her and Betty Joyce; Mrs. Reddick in her husband's refusal to acknowledge Helen? Why do you think that Mary Stroud broke through the convention to confront the men outside Tallgrass?
7. Why were Americans so frightened of Japanese-Americans during World War II—more than the German- and Italian-Americans? In her acknowledgments, Sandra Dallas mentions that she was inspired to write this book, in part, by the prison camp in Guantanamo Bay. What parallels do you see between them? What differences?
8. Did you recognize any characters from Sandra's other books in *Tallgrass*?