



Discussion Questions for Nina Stibbe's PARADISE LODGE

- 1.) Despite helping her mother find a new “man at the helm,” Lizzie’s life at home remains a bit chaotic and unconventional. In what ways are Lizzie’s experiences at Paradise Lodge similar to her domestic life? In what ways does her new job lend her the structure she’s lacking at home?
- 2.) Is Lizzie a reliable narrator of her own experience? Or is she so prone to invention and exaggeration—as evidenced by her exhaustive knowledge of euphemisms—that she can’t quite be trusted to recount events accurately?
- 3.) Lizzie says that she takes the job at Paradise Lodge because the punk craze or having a boyfriend “seemed too exhausting to commit to;” do you believe her reasoning or do you think she’s searching for something else at Paradise Lodge?
- 4.) Do you think that Lizzie’s mother is a good parent? Do you think Lizzie believes her mother has done a good job raising her?

- 5.) How do the patients at Paradise Lodge view Lizzie? In what ways is she more than just a nurse in the quirky community that springs up at the nursing home?
- 6.) How does Lizzie use comedy to cope with or hide painful feelings? Do you think humor is an effective coping mechanism for Lizzie, or does she end up burying anxieties and emotions that she should address directly?
- 7.) What's the most important life lesson that Lizzie learns while she's on the job. How does Lizzie grow after learning that lesson?
- 8.) How does her mother's romantic situation impact Lizzie's burgeoning relationship and her views on love? Is her mother's relationship with Mr. Holt a romantic ideal that Lizzie wants to emulate? Or a relationship example that she wants to avoid?
- 9.) Would you say that the novel has a villain? If so, who is it, and why?
- 10.) In your opinion, does the novel have a happy ending? Why or why not?