

## Questions

1. *Harriet Wolf's Seventh Book of Wonders* opens with a quote from one of Harriet Wolf's books. In it, the character of Weldon says his mother "aired her heart" and "it turned and consumed her." How does this passage influence your reading of the book?
2. The existence of Harriet Wolf's unreleased seventh book is a source of contention for many of the characters. Why do you think Harriet never published the book? What does the seventh book represent to Eleanor, Ruth and Tilton?
3. Early in the book, Ruth reflects on her strained relationship with her daughter. "To fail as a mother is to fail utterly, proof that I don't understand love in its most basic form, that I'm unworthy of the blind and unconditional love granted by simple biology," she thinks. Do you agree with Ruth? Why or why not? How does the book explore the ideas of failure and motherhood?
4. "All stories worth telling are love stories," writes Harriet at one point in the book. Do you agree with Harriet? How could this book be seen as a love story?
5. Ruthie and Tilton have very different relationships with their grandmother's house. Discuss those differences. How is the house like a character in the novel? What reactions does it inspire in the people who walk through its doors?
6. Harriet shares many of her thoughts on writing throughout the book. At one point, she writes, "This is the writer's first job: to list what's worth listing." How does Harriet determine what's worth listing? What do you make of her attitude towards writing? How does it change throughout the novel?
7. Discuss the party that Epitt Clapp takes Harriet to at Isley Wesler's house. How does the party transform Harriet's outlook on life? How does it inspire her?
8. The book explores the profound and complex bond between mothers and daughters. At one point, Ruth says her mother pops into her mind constantly. "It's like living my own life and my mother's at the same time," she reflects. Have you ever experienced this personally? If so, how did you come to terms with it?
9. The hiding place of the final book is revealed late in the novel. What leads to the decision to release Harriet's final writings? Why does Tilton jump from the window after freeing the book?
10. At one point, Harriet writes that she is tired "of being a woman writer in a man's world." What are some examples of challenges Harriet faces in life because of her gender? How are those challenges similar and different to the ones faced by her daughter and granddaughters?

11. Towards the end of the book, Eleanor sees Tilton wearing Harriet's blue dress and thinks to herself, "It occurs to me that maybe no one ever really dies until everyone who remembers you has died too." Discuss the connection between memory and death in the book. Do Harriet's books and her children give her a type of immortality?
12. Discuss the ending of the book and your emotional reaction to it. Do you read the ending as melancholy, hopeful or both? What do you imagine lies ahead for Tilton and Ruth? What do you think will happen to Eleanor and George?