

## Discussion Questions for *The Glass Madonna*

1. Sarah Stevens wants to learn the art of glassmaking. What resistance does she meet? Do women today still meet resistance to jobs traditionally performed by men or have role expectations completely relaxed?
2. Why does Sarah give up her virginity to Cal Caruso?
3. How does Cal's rejection affect Sarah?
4. What attracts Sarah to Roy Glen?
5. Sarah has a tendency to romanticize. What realities does she not face about glassmaking? About Roy Glen?
6. Sarah is not the only one hemmed in by traditional role expectations. How is Roy Glen crippled by what is expected of men?
7. How has the town of Clarksburg changed from the time Sarah's father, Nelson Stevens, was born to the time Sarah is in college? What effects do the changes have on its citizens?
8. In what ways are Anton Heimbach and Adelisa Swartzbauer typical immigrants? What hardships did they face in coming to this country?
9. Three women in the novel are presented with the glass Madonna. Compare and contrast the circumstances of each woman.
10. Livvie always has "a little something" to give to Sarah. What are the most important gifts Sarah receives from Livvie?
11. Discuss Katharine's character strengths and weaknesses. In what ways is Aunt Katharine a role model for Sarah?
12. Many characters in the novel are saddled with addictions. Examine the range of addictions and discuss their effects on others.
13. What obstacles trap Sarah in an obviously unhappy marriage? How does she overcome them?
14. What achievements of the women's movement enable Sarah to have a greater degree of freedom than women in earlier generations had?
15. Both the Korean War and Vietnam War affect characters in the novel. How did war affect Sarah's cousin Pete? Cal? Sarah herself?
16. What evidence do you have of Sarah changing in the novel's final chapters?
17. What do you think the future hold for Sarah?