

Discussion Questions
For Nancy Thayer's
The Guest Cottage

1. Both Sophie and Trevor feel that a change of place will help them overcome their losses and get clearheaded about the future. Have you ever wanted to “get away” from life for a while, to take a deep breath and think about your life? Have you ever done it?
2. If you had been Sophie, would you have been willing to take a chance sharing a house with a stranger? Do you think Sophie took an unnecessary risk?
3. Is Trevor too good to be true? Many people have said to me that they've never known a man who did a good job of cleaning the kitchen. Discuss!
4. In the book, Trevor says, “I think sometimes people marry the wrong person to get the right children.” Do you think, in some cases, this is true?
5. Jeannette, Sophie's mother-in-law, says, “I have lived a long life and I've seen a lot of friends get divorced. For some of them, it's a good thing, a door opening to freedom. For others, it's heartbreaking. But the worst divorces happen when people fight and snarl and involve everyone in the extended family in some kind of hideous feud.” Do you agree that for some families, a divorce can be a good thing?
6. Sophie has two best friends, Angie and Bess. How are her two friends different from each other? Which friend are you most like? Which friend knows Sophie the best?
7. Connor Swenson is secretive about his foot, but when Hester comes along, she forces him to see a doctor. Have you known any older people who try to hide any physical conditions? Why does Connor confide in Hester?
8. Trevor is six years younger than Sophie. Do you think their marriage will last? Why or why not?
9. If you were in Sophie's place, which man would you choose: Trevor or Hristo? Why?
10. Sophie finds more than interesting men on the island. What talent does she rediscover, and what does it mean to her now? On page 224, Sophie thinks: *In the music room, she began with a soft Chopin sonata so that she wouldn't wake any sleeping children. After a few moments, she lost all sense of other people in the house, emotions she was trying to hide from, and fears about her future. She entered the world of her music with all its order and beauty. Each time she played the piano, she had the sense that this was what life had intended for her all along. Not to be the best, not to be a concert pianist, not to make her parents happy, but*

simply to play. Do you have a skill, a talent, an obsession, to knit or make pottery or write fiction or make jewelry that is a great pleasure for you whether it makes money for you or not? Do all people have such secret gifts?