

## SOMEWHERE SAFE WITH SOMEBODY GOOD

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Father Tim and Cynthia return to Mitford after five years of hectic retirement, drawn to the place that means home to them. What does home mean to you?

In your opinion, does Mitford still take care of its own? What does that phrase mean to you?

Do you think Mitford is a model for living a true and authentic life? Why or why not?

How is your local community similar to Mitford? In what ways is it different?

How has retirement changed Father Tim? Did Father Tim make the right decision declining the bishop's offer? How do you think his life would have changed had he returned to his job as pastor?

Even though Father Tim no longer has an official pulpit, he's still the lynchpin of his community. How does he serve the community, and do you think he's more or less effective in his new role?

There are certain points throughout the novel where Father Tim feels "twelve years old again" (53, 143). Do you ever experience something similar, and if so, when?

Father Tim and Cynthia exchange love letters. What does this say about their marriage? Why is being "somewhere safe with somebody good" the source of ultimate happiness for Cynthia? Do you agree? If not, what would your source of ultimate happiness be?

Though *Somewhere Safe with Somebody Good* is mostly from Father Tim's point of view, we're occasionally treated to glimpses of Mitford life as seen through the eyes of others, such as Coot, Hope, and Esther. What purpose do you think these shifting views serve and how do they contribute to the story?

What do you think of Dooley and Lace's decision? How do you think they will handle the next phase of their journey?

Sammy has come a long way since meeting Father Tim, but clearly still has a long way to go. Discuss his journey to becoming a happy, well-adjusted adult. Do you think that is possible for him? Why or why not?