

## Discussion Questions for *Designated Daughter*

1. What is a Designated Daughter? Are you one? Was your mother one? How many friends of yours are filling the role? Why do you think “the duty,” as Phyllis would say, usually falls to the daughter?
2. What did Phyllis mean when she said, “After twenty years, Debby was ready for home”? How do you think D.G.’s life would have progressed had she not chosen to come?
3. How do Phyllis and D.G. differ from each other? How are they similar? How are they different in their writing styles?
4. Phyllis and D.G.’s support system begins with family and branches out from there. Although they rely on each other first and foremost, who and what else sustains them?
5. Death and funerals and cemeteries are mentioned often in *Designated Daughter*, yet don’t read as depressing. Why is that? Why do you think Phyllis chose “To Thine Own Self Be True” for the headstone?

6. How do you see D.G.'s relationship with her daughter, Maggie? Is it similar in any way to D.G. and Phyllis's relationship? How do you think becoming a grandmother affected D.G.?

7. Since reading the book, have you noticed more Designated Daughters and their mothers when you are out and about? Do they seem to be enjoying or enduring their Bonus Years?

8. Each stage of Designated Daughterhood takes some adjusting. How do attitudes change as life gets more difficult?

9. What have D.G. and Phyllis learned from each other? Are they interdependent or codependent?

10. Did you respond viscerally while reading *Designated Daughter*? Do you look at the time of your mother's aging with fear?

11. Some readers have said they are worried for D.G. when the inevitable comes. Are you? How do you imagine the story continuing after the Bonus Years have passed?

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