Seven Perfect Things Book Club Questions

The novel opens with Elliot facing a tremendous loss in his life. What are some of the coping mechanisms he utilizes to help him through this difficult time? How do they contrast with how Mary copes with the challenges of her situation?

When Abby witnesses a wriggling sack being thrown into a river, she reacts by impulsively jumping into the freezing water to save whatever is inside. What does this say about her character, and how do her traits help her survive what she must face ahead?

How have the puppies acted as both a catalyst and a healing element throughout the story?

Mary is in an abusive marriage, constantly living under the threat of a vicious and controlling husband. When Mary has self-doubts due to the circumstances she has lived through, Elliot explains that Stan gaslighted her, sowing seeds of doubt in Mary, making her question her own perceptions. Why do you think victims of this manipulative technique find it so difficult to recognize this is happening to them?

Occasionally Abby shares her frustrations about her father with Elliot. What qualities does she see in Elliot that enable her to open up to him in this way?

Elliot is very perceptive about human nature. At one point he tells Mary that when we demand that people live the way we think they should, it’s never helpful. Do you agree with this statement?

Before Stan kidnaps Abby and her mother, Mary hides Elliot’s contact info in a book of poetry. How does this clever choice work in her favor and also add other complications?

Eventually Elliot is able to help Mary and Abby by opening up his home where they can be safe. He discusses this with his friend Roger, and accidentally reveals his own feelings of guilt. Do you think Elliot made the heathiest choice for both himself and his guests? Why or why not?

Mary confides in her friend Viv that she has been a coward with her feelings where Elliot was concerned. What is it from her past that makes her fearful that she doesn’t deserve love or a second chance?