



Book Club Questions for **Mrs Rickaby's Lullaby** by Julie Thorndyke

1. Is Mrs Rickaby a reliable narrator? Can we trust her opinion of Ralph Furnace?
2. How credible is Irene as a character? And what makes her so? What makes her a likely/unlikely friend of Mrs Rickaby?
3. How does Mrs Rickaby's character develop during the novel?
4. Music, painting, swimming: to what extent do Eileen Rickaby's pastimes take the place of friends in her fairly solitary life?
5. How has Mrs Rickaby's past shaped her response to Irene and Ralph's new relationship?
6. Do you identify most with Eileen or Irene?
7. Although Mrs Rickaby was honest and heartfelt about her concern for her friend Irene and anxious to protect her, the exposure of Ralph's true nature signalled the end of the women's friendship. What are your thoughts about this?
8. Reflecting on the friendship group dynamics between characters in the story, to what extent does living in their closed retirement community influence their choice of companions?
9. Mrs Rickaby/Mrs Enderby, Eileen/Irene. Do you think any significance can be attached to the author's choice of similar names for her characters?
10. What role do pets play in the lives of the characters?
11. Mrs Rickaby has a favourite author who lulls her to sleep. Can you identify him? What is your "go-to-book" to fight insomnia?
12. Does the shrinking social circle in Mrs Rickaby's life cause her to be more dependent on family members?
13. The novel opens and ends with Mrs Rickaby writing. On the last pages, she suggests several reasons for deciding to write her life story. If you were to write yours, what would be your main motivation, and what might stop you doing so?