



6700 Merle Hay Road, Johnston, IA 50131 • Voice: 515-278-5233 • Fax: 515-278-4975 • [info@johnstonlibrary.com](mailto:info@johnstonlibrary.com)

## Johnston Public Library Book Discussion Questions

### **Did Ye Hear Mammy Died?** By Seamas O'Reilly

#### Summary

**A heart-warming and hilarious family memoir of growing up as one of eleven children raised by a single dad in Northern Ireland at the end of the Troubles**

After the untimely death of his mother, five-year-old Séamas O'Reilly and his ten siblings were left to the care of their loving but understandably beleaguered father. In this thoroughly delightful memoir, we follow O'Reilly and the rest of his rowdy clan as they learn to cook, clean, do the laundry, and struggle (often hilariously) to keep the household running smoothly and turn into adults in the absence of the woman who had held them together. Along the way, we see O'Reilly through various adventures: There's the time the family's windows were blown out by an IRA bomb; the time a priest blessed their thirteen-seater caravan before they took off for a holiday on which they narrowly escaped death; the time O'Reilly worked as a guide in a leprechaun museum during the recession; and of course, the time he inadvertently found himself on ketamine while serving drinks to the president of Ireland.

Through it all, the lovable, ginger-haired O'Reilly regales us with his combination of wit, absurdity, and tenderness, creating a charming and unforgettable portrait of an oddly gigantic family's search for some semblance of normalcy.

#### Discussion Questions

1. What did you think of the book overall? Did you enjoy reading it? Why or why not? Did it hold your interest?
2. Discuss your favorite or least favorite parts of the story. Did anything about the book surprise you? Or was it too predictable?
3. Share a quote from the book. What about this quote was meaningful to you?
4. What did you think of the way the author told the story? Was there a balance of humor and sensitivity?
5. What did you learn about Irish culture or history? Do you think the author's experiences were reflective of Irish life or were his family's experiences unique?

6. Could you relate to this family's experiences? Were they similar to or different from your own family's?
7. Share your thoughts about the title of this book. Did you find it appropriate or would you have chosen something else?
8. Do you often read memoirs? If so, did you find this book typical of the genre? If not, did this book inspire you to read more memoirs? Do memoirs differ from autobiographies? If so, how?
9. Were you satisfied by the ending of this book? If not, how would you have wanted the author to wrap it up?
10. If you could ask the author one question, what would it be? Would you read other books by this author? Why or why not?

Summary from GoodReads.com  
Discussion Questions from the Johnston Public Library staff