



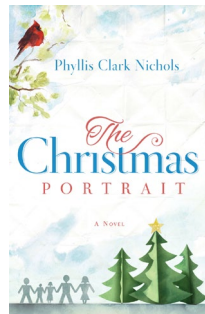
Greetings from Phyllis  
Let's swap stories over a cup of tea.

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DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR  
**THE CHRISTMAS PORTRAIT**

By Phyllis Clark Nichols



- This book deals with grief at Christmas. What makes Christmas such a tender time for those who are grieving?
- Traditions were important to the Harding family. Describe some of their traditions you find most meaningful.
- Compare and contrast Kate and Laramie.
- In Viktor Frankl's book, *Man's Search for Meaning*, he reminds us that we can handle life's hardships as long as we have purpose. What gave the Harding family members purpose in the midst of their grief? How did they express their purpose?
- Discuss the personalities of Diana Joy and her sister, Susannah Hope. How were they alike? How were they different?
- The O'Hara and Harding women had double names. Discuss that significance and the importance of one's name.
- Examine young Kate's major struggles as she is navigating her grief. What was one poignant scene to illustrate her struggle?



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- Discuss the meaning and relevance of the cardinal.
- I am frequently questioned by readers as to the identity of the mysterious Mister Josh. My answer is always the same. "I really don't know. Who is it that you need Mister Josh to be?" So, what is your answer?
- Thinking back through the cast of characters, with which character did you most readily identify the most? The least? Discuss reasons why.