



Dovecote

by Anne Britting Oleson

ISBN9781945805387

Six years ago, Gwynn Forest's husband Richard committed suicide. After that, she struggled to keep things together, emotionally, mentally, and financially. Then three fortuitous things happened: she sold the construction company she had started with Richard to a larger firm; she inherited a seaside cottage from an elderly English great-aunt whom she had never met, and she was offered a job on spec, illustrating a book for a friend. Gwynn doesn't believe in ghosts—until disturbing and frightening occurrences at Gull Cottage change her mind. Gwynn doesn't believe in herself—until, finding herself left with no one else to turn to, she learns to rely on her own inner resources.

From the author

I love houses, and I love the west coast of England. Imagine my delight in stumbling across a photograph of a cottage with a blue door, located in a seaside Cornish village. I spent months imagining what kind of stories lived behind that blue door—and then one came to me, complete.

Discussion Questions

1. *Dovecote* can be seen as a novel about life after loss. Gwyn has lost her husband and her way in life. How does she find it again?
2. In the novel, Gwyn fights the overgrown garden. Why is that so important to her? In what way might that be symbolic?
3. Gwyn makes overtures to the only family member she knows in the village, and is rebuffed. What is the basis of this rejection, and why is this important?
4. Martin does not think his daughter Mary sees ghosts. What is his understanding of his daughter? Do you think he sells her short?
5. Gwyn Chelton changes dramatically from the girl in the old photograph, to the elderly woman who leaves the cottage to a great-niece she doesn't know. Trace the change, and discuss the things which contribute to that evolution.
6. The climactic occurrence, for both Gwyns, is violent and painful. Their reactions are both similar and different. Why?
7. Gwyn's solicitor, on first meeting, seems dry and officious; her perceptions of him change as she meets him in different settings. Describe the changes, and discuss what prompts them.
8. Does real love ever die?

**About the author**

Anne Britting Oleson lives in the mountains of central Maine with her family. She is the author of three poetry chapbooks, *The Church of St. Materiana* (Moon Pie Press, 2007), *The Beauty of It* (Sheltering Pines Press, 2010), and *Planes and Trains and Automobiles* (Portent Press, forthcoming 2015). She is a founding member of Simply Not Done, a women's reading, writing, and teaching cooperative.