

Discussion Questions for *Snow Country, A Copper Island Novel*, by Kristin Neva

1. What did you think of the setting of Snow Country? How did the setting affect the characters and story?
2. Which parts of Snow Country made you laugh? Cry?
3. Beth puts her journal in the sauna stove, wanting to let go of the past year. Grandma encourages her to hold onto it. (Chapter 8, page 52.) Would you have burned the journal if you were Beth? Why or why not? Have you ever had a “journal burning experience” where you tried to forget your past?
4. Grandma tells Beth, “Sweetheart, our experiences make us who we are, the painful ones as well as the joyous ones.” (Chapter 8, page 52.) How have difficult circumstances shaped you?
5. Pastor Chips says, “Sometimes, life is like a Copper Country winter—spiritually, emotionally, or physically—and we feel like spring will never come.” (Chapter 32, page 183.) Have you ever been in a long winter period spiritually or emotionally?
6. Samuel Clinton says, “Winter in the UP reminds us that we have hope, that spring will come, trees will bud, and we will have new life. Hope that is seen is not hope—that’s why Yoopers have real hope. But spring always comes.” (Chapter 12, page 76.) If you’ve been in a spiritual or emotional winter, did you have hope for spring? If so, what sustained your hope?
7. Towards the end of the book, Grandma challenges Beth, “Is that how you make decisions? You only decide to do something if it falls into place?” (Chapter 48, page 261.) How have you made major decisions in your life?
8. When Beth tells Mother that Chip Atkinson was Grandma’s pastor, Mother hangs up on her. Grandma sighs and says, “Sometimes wounds don’t heal when they’re not properly treated.” (Chapter 22, page 131.) What did Grandma mean by that?

9. What messages about sexual purity were communicated to Beth during her formative years? (See Chapters 21 and 28.) How did these shape her positively and/or negatively?
10. What did you think of fictional author Dr. Benley? Do you agree with any of his advice? Disagree?
11. Are Mother and Beth right to be concerned about Danny's past promiscuity? Does practicing abstinence before marriage help prepare one for fidelity in marriage? Why or why not?
12. Why did Danny feel shame? How open should one be about relationships from the past?
13. How did Beth change during the course of the novel?
14. Which character did you relate to the most? Why? Which character would you most like to spend time with?
15. Have you been exposed to Finnish-American culture? If so, what aspects of the book capture your experiences?
16. Aimee will be a main character in the next Copper Island novel. What do you hope will happen?