

A BOOK DISCUSSION GUIDE

for *Frozen* by Mary Casanova

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mary Casanova is the author of twenty-nine books for young readers, ranging from picture books such as *The Day Dirk Yeller Came to Town* and *Utterly Otterly Night* to novels (*The Klipfish Code*, *Moose Tracks*, and *RIOT*). She has written *Jess, Chrissa, Chrissa Stands Strong* (which is also an HBO movie), *McKenna*, and *McKenna, Ready to Fly!* (a Universal Studios movie) for American Girl. Her books are on many state reading lists and have earned the American Library Association Notable Award, Aesop Accolades from the American Folklore Society, Parent's Choice Gold Award, Booklist Editor's Choice, as well as two Minnesota Book Awards. She speaks frequently around the country at readings and library conferences. She lives with her husband and three dogs in a turn-of-the-century house in Ranier, Minnesota, near the Canadian border.

PRAISE FOR FROZEN

“Mary Casanova knows the lakes and woods of northern Minnesota as few other writers do, and she brings them to life along with an intriguing mystery set in that region's dark past.”

—Marion Dane Bauer, author of *On My Honor*

“Suspenseful . . . Casanova creates a strong sense of place and ably establishes her story's historical context. Readers should find Sadie Rose an admirable heroine as she finds her voice and her future.”

—*Publishers Weekly*

“Politics play a role as readers learn about power, corruption, class inequality, the environment, and the strength of family ties. This book does a wonderful job of depicting the time period.”

—*School Library Journal*

“Beautifully crafted, bringing to life the lakes and forests of the Canadian border . . . these themes are all woven through a setting that drives its characters' actions, while paralleling issues of today.”

—*Booklist*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: *FROZEN* BY MARY CASANOVA

1. *Frozen* is set in the 1920s during a time of great social change—from the dawn of Prohibition to the passage of the 19th Amendment, which gave women the right to vote. Why did the author pick this time period to tell this story of a girl trying to reclaim her voice?
2. When the novel opens, Sadie Rose is sixteen and hasn't spoken since she was found in the snow eleven years earlier. Her memories and her voice seemed trapped inside—or frozen—until she stumbles upon photos of her mother. Are there times when we lock away memories that are too difficult or painful to face?
3. Sadie Rose struggles mightily to find her voice. How is this struggle universal? Did you identify with Sadie Rose's need to speak out, especially at the novel's conclusion? What holds us back from finding our voice and using it?
4. The novel's budding environmentalist, Victor Guttenburg, is based on a real Minnesotan, Ernest Oberholtzer, who fought to preserve the waterways we now know as the BWCA and the Quetico from being turned into a series of industrial dams and reservoirs. How does this environmentalist's struggle parallel Sadie Rose's struggle?
5. When Sadie Rose first meets Victor, she's reluctant to communicate with him without the Worthingtons at home. Not too long after, she sets off with Victor in his canoe to explore the lake—something she has never risked in the past. What is it in Victor that draws her in and ignites her willingness to defy social convention?
6. What's at stake for Sadie Rose? If she loses the support of the Worthingtons, what kind of prospects might she face in the 1920s, at the age of sixteen, in northern Minnesota?
7. The author was inspired to write *Frozen* after stumbling upon an account of a prostitute found frozen in the snow in Koochiching County in the early 1900s. The account stated that someone found her body in the snow and stood it up in the corner as a joke at the beginning of a town hall meeting, "and it caused quite a stir." It's a haunting image. Why is it so troubling? What does this

event say about life in northern Minnesota at that time?

8. How does Sadie Rose go from judging her mother as a prostitute to having empathy and compassion for her?

9. Why is understanding her mother's past—and death—important to Sadie Rose's future?

10. Though Mary Casanova grew up in St. Paul, she and her husband moved north shortly after college to the Minnesota-Canada border. How does her love of wilderness come through the pages of *Frozen*?

11. Casanova is working on a sequel to *Frozen*, titled *Ice-Out*. Of it, she writes:

Ice-out is a sudden thawing of lake ice, often precipitated by turbulent winds that break the ice into great sheets. Ice-out often happens violently, quickly, and signals a new season. Symbolically, in the course of the novel, each of the main characters face dramatic points of self-definition—pivotal choices—that will change the course of their lives.

What do you think will happen in the sequel? And more importantly, what would you like the author to delve deeper into in the lives of Sadie Rose, Owen and Trinity? For fun, feel free to compile your answers and send them to the author at goodbooks@marycasanova.com. You never know, perhaps you'll have an influence in the next book's development.

12. Mary Casanova grew up as a middle child in a noisy family of ten children; writing was a way for her to have a voice. She's written over 30 books, ranging from picture books (*One-Dog Canoe*) to adventure novels (*Moose Tracks*); from books for American Girl (*McKenna*) to historical fiction (*The Klipfish Code*). *Frozen* is her first YA novel aimed at readers ages 13 and up—a cross-over novel with many adult fans. In her work, what themes do you see the author returning to again and again?

13. A few book clubs have journeyed to Rainy Lake for *Frozen* book tours. They've rented houseboats and guides and visited Kettle Falls Hotel, Mallard Island, Atsokan Island, Ranier, the Koochiching County Museum in International Falls, and even the author at her home across from the historic lift bridge in Ranier. What other books lend themselves to book tours? Would your book club consider such a tour someday in conjunction with reading a book?