

THE FRIENDSHIP LIST

READER DISCUSSION GUIDE

SUGGESTED MENU

(Recipes follow the discussion questions)

Baked Zucchini

Ellen's Chicken Parm

Pairs well with Chianti

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Note: These questions contain spoilers, so it's recommended that you finish the book before reading the questions.

1. Every satisfying novel shows character growth. In what ways were Ellen and Unity different at the end of the book than they were at the beginning? What happened in the story to convince each woman that she had to make a change in her life? How did the challenge lists change them? Which character changed the most?
2. Why do you think the neighborhood of Silver Pines appealed to Unity so much? What did it represent to her?
3. Which woman did you like more? Why?
4. Early in the book, Ellen and Unity had a falling-out. What caused the rift? How did they heal their friendship? How did they stay connected with each other even when Ellen was out of town?

5. Susan Mallery is renowned for her in-depth characterization, and a big part of that is giving readers a clear picture of the characters' lives before the story even started. Discuss what you know about each of these characters from prior to page 1: Ellen, Unity, Keith, Thaddeus. How did their lives prior to this point affect their actions in the story? (Shoutout to Thaddeus's late mom for ironing his tips!)
6. If you had to choose, which guy would you marry, Keith or Thaddeus? Why? If marriage is off the table and we're just talking about a hook-up, would your answer change?
7. What did you think of Ellen's reaction when she walked in on Lissa and Luka in the hotel room? Did she do the right thing? Why or why not? What would you have done?
8. Did you guess what was bothering Lissa before she blurted it out to her dad? Looking back through the story, discuss the ways that you could tell that Lissa was hiding something. Should Keith have realized sooner? Why or why not?
9. What surprised you in the story? Which scenes made you laugh? What moments are sticking with you?
10. Name something you would put on your own personal challenge list. Would that help you grow in some way and, if so, how? What has held you back from doing it already?

RECIPES

BAKED ZUCCHINI

Author's Note: If you prepare this first and put it in the oven after you've made the sauce but before you start assembling the chicken cutlets, both dishes will be done at the same time.

4 whole zucchini, sliced into 1/4-inch thick rounds

2 Tbsp olive oil

Garlic salt & pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Toss the zucchini pieces with olive oil. Layer them in concentric circles in a pie plate or tart pan. Salt and pepper each layer. Bake for about 30 minutes.

ELLEN'S CHICKEN PARM

Sauce:

- 1 small onion, diced
- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 2 cloves of garlic, minced
- 1 28-oz can of crushed tomatoes or tomato puree
- 1 tomato, diced
- 1 Tbsp basil
- 1 tsp oregano
- 1/2 tsp thyme
- 1/4 tsp cayenne powder 1 bay leaf

Chicken:

- 3 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- ½ cup flour
- 1 tsp garlic salt
- 1/4
- ½ cup flour
- 1 tsp garlic salt
- ¼ tsp ground black pepper
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup bread crumbs, plain or Italian seasoned
- 1 Tbsp olive oil for brushing the pan
- Oil for frying

Topping:

- 1 cup shredded mozzarella
- ¼ cup shredded parmesan

If desired, serve over cooked spaghetti noodles.

For the sauce: Heat 2 Tbsp olive oil over medium heat. When glistening, add the onions and sauté until translucent. Add the garlic and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds longer. Stir in the remaining sauce ingredients. Cook to a simmer, stirring regularly, then lower heat and continue to simmer while assembling the chicken.

For the chicken: Brush a 13x9-inch pan with 1 Tbsp of olive oil and set aside. Heat oven to 400 degrees. Place three dishes side by side next to the stovetop. In the first, mix flour with garlic salt and pepper. In the second, whisk the two eggs. In the third, place the bread crumbs. Heat ¼ inch of oil in a heavy-bottomed pan over medium-low heat.

Slice each breast in half to make six cutlets. Pound each cutlet to about ¼-inch thick. Dredge in flour, then egg wash, then bread crumbs. Sauté until both sides are brown, about four minutes per side. Add oil as needed.

Assembly: Place chicken cutlets in 13x9-inch pan. Pour sauce over chicken. Top with shredded cheese. Put into the oven and bake until cheese is melted, about ten minutes. Turn oven to broil and move dish closer to the heat. Broil until cheese is browned, checking every minute or so to make sure it doesn't burn.