



***The Woman They Could Not Silence* by Kate Moore  
Discussion Friday, 21 March at 10:00 am.**

1. Elizabeth employs a variety of tactics --- physical resistance, negotiating with hospital staff, writing --- to protest her treatment throughout the book. Which techniques were most effective for her? What strategies would you turn to in her place?
2. “Novel reading” and irregular menstrual cycles are a few of the many reasons that women were admitted to asylums in Elizabeth’s time. Which, if any, of these justifications stood out to you? How has our understanding of these “causes of insanity” changed?
3. Elizabeth and McFarland have a complicated relationship to say the least. What did you think of her continuous attempts to redeem him? Did she truly think he would change, or was she just trying to improve her own circumstances? What were the long-lasting effects of the relationship on each of them?
4. When Elizabeth is first released from the asylum, how does her homecoming compare to her daydreams and expectations?

5. Right or wrong, McFarland was completely trusted by the Jacksonville Asylum's Board of Trustees. What impact did this have on his patients? How did the Board respond to Fuller's investigation and recommendations? Can you think of a way to avoid such conflicts of interest?

6. Governor Oglesby was not required to act on the findings of the investigative committee and planned to keep them under wraps until the next meeting of the Illinois General Assembly. What motivated him to keep the report under wraps?

7. How did Elizabeth's status as a woman, mother and asylum patient both help and hinder her lobbying efforts? How did she use men's expectations of her to bolster her causes?

8. Which of Elizabeth's many accomplishments do you think she was most proud of? Is there anything else you see as her greatest achievement?