

Great Book Discussion Questions – *Desire Under the Elms*

1. Does the dialogue get in the way of understanding the story? Why or why not?
2. What is the “something” that permeates the Cabot household? Is it the spirit of Eben’s mother? Is it evil? Is it lust (for land or women, or gold)?
3. Do you think the characters of Peter and Simeon are fully developed, or are they 2 dimensional?
4. What is the nature of Cabot’s hardness? Is it hardness of spirit, or hardness of heart?
5. Is Abbie a likeable figure? Does she intend to “swallow everything up,” as Eben thinks when he first meets her?
6. Is Cabot mad for believing that Abbie and he have conceived a son? Is this just another side of his vanity? Does he understand the taunts of his neighbors regarding the baby, or is he blocking the taunts out of his mind?
7. Does Cabot see himself as a Biblical figure, and if so, why?
8. Does it seem believable that Eben would turn Abbie in as a murderer? Why or why not?