



1. What did you think of the arguments that Linwood gives Connor in response to his request to court her? What about her compromise that they wait until after Christmas? Did you agree with her decision, or did you agree more with Miss Mamie's response to it?
2. There are various moments when Linwood realizes that moving back home may be an opportunity as opposed to a penance. At what points in the story do we see turning points where her outlook changes?
3. Throughout the novel we get pearls of wisdom that were passed down from Granny Beth. Which was your favorite as you were reading?
4. On page 157, Linwood references Albert Schweitzer, saying, "Happiness is nothing but good health and a bad memory." Where do we see examples of this in the story? Are there any examples that you can think of from your own life?
5. Forgiveness plays a major role in the story. On page 7, Linwood says, "I'd forgiven Phil long ago as an act of obedience and spiritual self-preservation, but my emotions hadn't quite gotten the memo." Similarly, in his sermon on page 246, Connor speaks of forgiveness and having the feelings to go along with it. What do they both mean? Where do we see forgiveness and the feelings that go along with it coming together in the story?

Discussion Questions



6. How does Linwood's relationship with her mother change throughout the course of the novel? What things does she learn about her mother and herself in the process?
7. How does Linwood's relationship with Tommy change over the course of their road trip? What confidences do they share and what do they learn about each other?
8. Did you have any guesses as to who Tommy's mystery woman was? Were you surprised when her identity was revealed?
9. On page 162, Linwood says, "Sometimes it's not such a good thing when God smiles. You might just be in for a lesson." What are some of the many lessons that different characters—including both Linwood and Connor—have learned by the end of the novel?
10. Were you surprised by how the novel ended? What do you imagine is in store for Linwood and Connor in the future? For Miss Mamie? For Tommy and Carla?