



1. Mike knows that his father has a history of violence. Why do you think he believes so strongly in his innocence?
2. Mike chooses his job over his relationship with Sarah, but when his estranged father becomes a prime suspect in a murder case, he impulsively drops everything to support his claim for innocence. Why do you think Mike puts his father before his job when he isn't able to do the same for Sarah?
3. Mike says, "my mom . . . had depths to her heart I'd never be able to fathom." How is he similar to his mother in this respect? Is this quote relatable to his father? If so, how?
4. What attracted Mike's mother to his father and why did she stay with him as long as she did? What are the ramifications for Mike's relationships?
5. Mike learns from his mother that she has had periodic contact with Jack since their divorce. What do you think compelled her to keep reaching out to him?
6. How does Mike's first experience with his father at Rum Ponds Sporting Camps affect him and his relationship with his father? Do you think it strengthens or weakens their relationship? Why?
7. Almost all of the characters (Mike, Charley, B.J./ Brenda, etc.) have scenes in both the present story and Mike's flashbacks. In what ways do these characters change between the years? In what ways do they stay the same?

### *Discussion Questions*

8. What role do Mr. DeSalle and his young son play in the story? How do they act as for Mike and his dad?
9. How does the expression “the apple doesn’t fall far from the tree” apply or not apply to the book?
10. What role do you think the North Woods setting—and Mike’s relationship with it—plays in the story?