



1. How does the prologue affect the tone with which you read the rest of the book?
2. How do you feel about the author's descriptions of Acker's Gap? How do the physical descriptions of the place make you feel about the characters who live there?
3. How does the way Chill is introduced influence the way you read the story?
4. What do you think about Ruthie, Bell, and Tom's relationship? Why do you think Bell isn't close to anyone else in town but Nick? How do her relationships change over the course of the book?
5. What do you think about the way we learn what happened in Bell's childhood? Was this a surprise?
6. How does the author use descriptions to paint different pictures of the book's settings?
7. What do you think of Rhonda? Would you keep her as an employee if you were her boss?
8. Do you think Carla's decision-making is a product of her age or of her character? Why do you think her relationship with Bell is so strained?
9. What do you think about the reason for the trailer fire? In a similar situation, what would you have done?
10. Did the identity of the kingpin of the illegal drug operation surprise you? What did you think during that final scene?
11. What do you think will happen next between Bell and Shirley? Why doesn't she want to talk to Bell?

*Discussion  
Questions*

