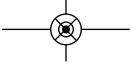
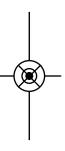
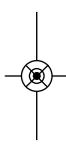




1. The landscape of the American West, and particularly Yellowstone National Park, is almost its own character in *Back of Beyond*. How do you think this landscape in particular affects the story? How does it serve to heighten the tension of the novel?
2. One of the reoccurring themes throughout the novel is trust: whom you should trust, who deserves trust, and how you earn it. Is there someone in the story you believe Cody should have trusted more? Someone he should have trusted less? Why do you think this?
3. How does Cody's inner struggle with alcoholism manifest in his outward struggle to save his son? How do you think it shapes his actions and the choices he makes throughout the novel?
4. What was your initial impression of Gracie Sullivan at the beginning of the novel? How did this impression change throughout the course of the story?
5. On page 85, the author writes, "Cody was not good and he was incapable of being good, but that didn't mean he didn't recognize and revere goodness." Do you agree with Cody's assessment of himself as a bad person? Do you think his opinion might have changed by the end of the novel?
6. Much of the action in *Back of Beyond* takes place in an extremely remote part of Yellowstone without cell service or internet. Have you ever had an experience where you were completely isolated? What was it like? If you haven't, would you ever go on a packing trip like the ones Jed leads?

Discussion Questions



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7. Were you suspicious of Rachel Mina before her true motivations were revealed? When did you start to think there might be more to her story than meets the eye?
 8. The title of the book is taken from the name of Jed's outfitting trip—"Back of Beyond: The Ultimate Yellowstone Backcountry Adventure." What does the phrase "back of beyond" mean to you? Does it help you to visualize the country the characters are traveling across?
 9. On pages 238 to 239, Bull Mitchell says, "Keep in mind this is Yellowstone. Anything can happen here and plans always go wrong. It's just the nature of the place." How do you think this foreshadows the ending of the novel?
 10. Were you surprised by the sudden turn of events in the epilogue? Why or why not?