

Q 1 The book opens with a violent clash in July, then goes back in time to midwinter and takes 200 pages to return to the opening scene. Was that an effective way to structure the book? What did you learn by seeing the same incident from both Hadley Knox's and Russ van Alstyne's point of view?

Q 2 The climate, history, and physical characteristics of the Adirondack region play a large part in Julia Spencer-Fleming's work. How do they affect the characters and the action here? Could you set the story in another part of the United States? How would it be different if you did?

Q 3 What do you think about a plot woven around a contemporary social issue? Does it feel preachy, or relevant? The author has said "The great gift of fiction is creating empathy." Do you feel more empathetic towards the various types of people we meet in the book?

Q 4 Are Mike and Janice McGeogh justified in employing and hiding illegal immigrants? Are they taking advantage of their relationships with the chief of police and with their mother, Margy?

Q 5 How do different characters resolve the conflict between their duty as law abiding citizens and their obligations as compassionate human beings? Who gets it right? Who gets it wrong?

Q 6 Consider what we know about Hadley from this book and think about what has brought her to be a police officer in Millers Kill. What drives her? Does she have a "calling" for her work the way Clare has? Are Hadley and Clare more alike, or more dissimilar, in how they approach their work and execute their job duties?

Q 7 Clare tends to be reckless and impulsive, to jump first and ask questions later. Russ tends to be responsible and protective, driven by a sense of duty. In what ways do these traits help the characters? In what ways do they lead them into trouble?

Q 8 There's a complicated mystery taking place in *I SHALL NOT WANT*, but there are also three love stories in different phases of development. Is the crime story and the romance balanced? Do the personal stories enhance or take away from the mystery?

Q 9 There are two families at the heart of *I SHALL NOT WANT*: The Van Alstyne/McGeoghs and the Christies. In what ways are they alike? In what ways dissimilar? What do the contrasts between the two families say about the economy and opportunity in the upstate New York area?

Q 10 There are many times in the story when characters think about and talk about prayer, faith, and healing. What do you think of the religious aspects of the book. Do they underline people's actions, or serve as a distraction? Does anything said ring true to you?