



1. After Maggie's accident, everyone in her life reacts to the news in very different ways. What different ways of dealing with grief do you see on display in the novel, both healthy and unhealthy? How do you deal with tragedies in your own life?
2. On page 37, when Maggie wakes up from her time in the ICU, her mother says to her, "You were *perfect*," implying that she is now imperfect. Why do you think her mother reacts this way? What kind of impact do you think that comment has on Maggie when she's already in an emotional state?
3. Throughout the novel, Maggie has to navigate her changing relationship with her family. At one point she says, "This was the trouble with sisters. This was the trouble with family. I had barely cracked open the door to my life, and she'd just barged in and made herself at home." Why do you think Maggie feels invaded by her family? Do you think that her family really was out of line, or was Maggie just struggling? How does your own family react in times of trouble?
4. On page 111, Maggie sees her skin grafts for the first time and thinks, "I would forever be someone who made other people uncomfortable." Her immediate concern isn't about being less attractive, but about making others uncomfortable. What do you make of this reaction? What does it reveal about Maggie as a character? Why do we feel so uncomfortable around those who have physical differences?
5. The central focus of Maggie's physical therapy and the thing that her mother and others fixate on is walking: to get her walking again. What do you think the ability to walk symbolizes, not just for Maggie but for people in general? Just freedom, independence? Or is there something more about the ability to walk on our own that makes us terrified of losing the ability?

Discussion Questions



6. Ian tells Maggie that it is the trying that heals you, not necessarily succeeding. Do you think he's right? Why or why not? Do you think that, ultimately, it is the trying that heals Maggie?
7. While she is in the hospital, one of the people who provides Maggie with the most emotional support is her sister, Kitty. How do you see the relationship between Maggie and Kitty developing throughout the novel? Why do you think this happened, when they spent so many years estranged from each other?
8. Maggie's life has been divided into a "before" and an "after" by the accident. Have you experienced something that split your life like this? How do you think you can mesh the two people – the old you and the new you? Where can you see Maggie struggling to do this? Where can you see her succeeding?
9. On page 165, Maggie thinks, "This was my mangled body and my hopeless soul, stepping up at last." What does she mean by this? What motivates her to step up when she would rather give up? How do we come to terms with our own "hopeless souls" in our lives?
10. One of the epigraphs that opens the novel is a quote from Eve Lapin that says "There are all kinds of happy endings." What do you think of the ending of this story? What kind of happy ending is it? Is it satisfying, even if everything isn't perfect?