



1. Why does Lucy hate Swandyke, while her sister Dolly loves it? What do the mountains represent to each girl? Why did Lucy miss Dolly more than Ted during the women's estrangement?
2. Emancipation did not end prejudice against African Americans, and in some cases, their treatment was worse after freedom. Compare the lives of men during slavery with Joe's life as a post-Civil War black man. How was it better and worse? When did the attitude toward blacks change, and what brought about that change?
3. Why was Grace so anxious to find a husband after she discovered her family's fortune was gone? Did she have options other than marriage? Compare her life with Jim with what it would have been if she'd married George.
4. Should Minder have tried to save Billy Boy, even though both men would have drowned? Why didn't Minder identify himself to Kate when he encountered her in Fort Madison? Should he have done so?
5. What made Esther more ambitious than her sister? What alternative did she have to becoming a prostitute? Does she have a future in Swandyke? Will the townspeople ever forget she was a hooker?
6. Which character in the book did you relate to most, and why?
7. You knew from the outset that only four of the nine children caught in the avalanche would live. Which ones would you have saved?
8. If an avalanche took place in a small mountain town today, how would the residents' reactions differ from those of the townspeople in Swandyke in 1920? How would they be the same?
9. Why does tragedy bring people together? How did it change the characters in *Whiter Than Snow*? And how does it change people in general?

A Reading Group Guide

