

1. Amanda thinks she has the perfect home while Tally's life lacks stability and safety. How do you see this actually being reversed in the story?
2. Why do you think Chase named the fire Ghost? Why did he feel the need to give the fire a name?
3. What is the significance of Neil's occupation as a financial planner? Do you have any sympathy for his character and the choices he made? Why or why not?
4. What do you think of Bart's parenting skills? Is he a bad father? How do his parenting skills compare with Amanda and Neil's?
5. Why do you think Chase dreamed of Eliaz coming to him in the fire? What, if anything, do Josef and Eliaz represent to Chase? To Tally?
6. Do you envision Bart eventually finding the jewelry and gold? How do you see the imagined outcome affecting him?
7. Josef says in the last chapter, "[This] is what all survivors must decide. We have to decide how much we will choose to remember and how much courage we are willing to expend to do so." What do you think he means? Do you agree?
8. Did Neil and Amanda make a mistake by never mentioning the fire again after Chase stopped talking about it?
9. Why do you think Chase didn't care for woodworking and instead turned to film-making? Are these two pursuits similar in any way?
10. Are some secrets good to keep? How do we know which ones are meant to be kept?
11. What do you think constitutes the white-picket-fence life? Is it an illusion or is it something we can aspire to have?
12. What do you think was Amanda's greatest weakness? What was Neil's? Did they have strengths?
13. Discuss why Edward Bachmann kept the identity of his mother and the location of the jewelry a secret, and why he chose to tell Bart, rather than Amanda.
14. Tally doesn't seem to be adversely affected by the absence of her mother. Likewise, she expresses disappointment, rather than worry, when she loses contact with Bart. Are these flaws or virtues?
15. Why was Amanda drawn to Gary's affections? Do you think at the book's end that her marriage is safe? Why or why not?