

BOOK DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Questions About the Novel

1. Do any of the stories particularly stand out in your memory? What is it about those stories that causes you to remember them most? Did you especially like or dislike one of the stories?
2. What's your impression of small towns? Would you live in one? How does *Horseshoe* work with or against your notions of what it would be to live in a small town?
3. Who would you say are the main characters in this book?
4. The definition for what a novel is can be complicated. Have you ever read a novel-in-stories before this one? How do you like the genre as opposed to a more conventional novel where you might closely follow the action of a protagonist from the first page to the last? Do these stories offer "something more" as one book than they would as individual stories read in isolation?
5. What do you think of the various romantic relationships portrayed in *Horseshoe*? Do they seem very different than or remind you of romantic relationships that you know about?

6. There are prayers, Bible verses, and scenes in churches within this book. What do you notice about the characters' faith or lack of faith in *Horseshoe*? Does this book especially endorse or critique Christianity?

7. The book is not structured chronologically. What seem to be some of the governing principles used to sequence the stories?

Questions about Specific Stories in the Novel

1. Over the course of the action in "Suicide Hill," Coach Hooper decides that he wants to get married. What influences his decision? Does he seem to be acting in a reasonable way?

2. In "Eye Contact," we see adultery and then in the next story, "Ye Olde Trading Post," we get a Bible verse from Leviticus about the adulterer and adulteress being "put to death." What do you make of this?

3. Would you say one or both of the characters in "Aloe for the Burn" are changed by the end of the story? If so, what do they understand about themselves or their situations that they didn't know before the trip to South Beach?

4. What was the deal with Pam Scott in “Heaven Forbid”? Has she lost it psychologically? Do you feel bad for her?
5. In the “Bloody Bucket,” has Jenna Ewalt committed murder?
6. In “Every Word I Said,” do you think Brian Witzig did the right thing in apologizing to Erica Hooper at the basketball game?
7. Bob Simmons has that metaphor where there are three kinds of people: the sheep, the wolves, and the sheepdogs. When applied to people you know or the characters in these stories, does this metaphor seem plausible?
8. The story “Fag” is told through four points of view. What do you think about these four characters in relation to the use of the word fag? What choices do these characters make in relation to all the possibilities for their action?

Note: The author would love to hear from you. You can reach him virtually at TheTorg.com or share your answer to one of the questions above on the appropriate discussion thread.