

Crossing the Ford

Book Club Discussion Questions

1. Kenna is a foil for Ruby. For example, Ruby plays at being a Christian and Kenna plays at being a pagan. What other instances can you name? How does this reflection change the characters?
2. *Crossing the Ford* is full of symbolism. Can you name some examples and tell the meaning you attach? For example, Tom is always running. What can this signify?
3. There are many pairs and twins or mirror images throughout the book. What's that about? How many examples did you notice? Does that type of literary instrument make the book more interesting?
4. We never hear Miss speak and so must provide her words ourselves. How does that impact your experience with the book? What did you think when you learned Miss's identity?
5. Ruby isn't always honest as she recalls her times with Kenna and Valentine. At other times, she is brutally honest. How does this color your opinion of her?
6. Do you think Ruby actually had some sort of power over nature?
7. At one point, Ruby says, "I hate a liar, Miss." What do you think of that statement?
8. Why does it take Ruby so long in her storytelling to name the babies? Do you judge her for "giving them away like squash from her garden,"? How do you rate Ruby as a mother?
9. Frank is a very unsympathetic character. Did you ever feel any compassion for him? How does Ruby's version of the past influence you?
10. Valentine is flawed, even though we love him "terrible". How do you view him by the end of the book?

11. The Civil War ended over 150 years ago, yet our country still struggles with the issues surrounding the war. Have you ever visited or studied another country that still grapples with a past war? What parallels can you draw?
12. What is your favorite scene from Crossing the Ford, and why?
13. Where are Kenna, Valentine, and Ruby buried? Does it matter?
14. What do you think of the crane bag and the animal allies? Have you had such experiences?
15. Explain Kenna's death. How did that come about and who is guilty?
16. "It was me, Miss, stopped the world from turning." One of my favorite Rubyisms. What's yours?
17. What do you think of Ruby's views on warfare? Do you think women are more deadly than men?
18. Ruby ends up owning everything, including Kenna's money. Is that an accident or a planned outcome?
19. What do you make of the cover art? Do you see any hidden images or symbolism?
20. What discussion question is missing that you would like to bring up?