

Discussion questions for *LAND OF A HUNDRED WONDERS*

1. As a result of her brain injury, Gibby interprets the world in a slightly different way than the rest of us do. For instance, the filter that “normal” people employ to keep themselves from saying things that are “inappropriate” is not functioning normally in Gib’s brain. Do you ever wish you could be as honest as she is?
2. What is a miracle? Gibby believes. Do you?
3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of living in a small rural town like Cray Ridge?
4. Life has given every major character in the book— lemons. Have they successfully made lemonade?
5. We all experience painful loss in our lives. Do you believe the adage, “What doesn’t kill you makes you stronger?”
6. Gibby’s relationship with her departed Mama is as alive as many of her other relationships are in the book. Do you believe in life after death?
7. Much of the relationship between Gibby and her Grampa is based on his desire to keep her safe. How do you balance your need to keep your children out of harm’s way and yet encourage them to be brave?

8. Clever is a wild child. What do you envision her future to be?
  
9. Many of Gib's observations of the "colored" characters in the book would now be considered politically incorrect. What do you think of political correctness? Does it at times keep us further apart rather than bring us together?
  
10. How do you think the Vietnam war affected us as a country? On a personal level? Were you supportive or did you protest? Why?
  
11. Gibby finds spiritual solace at Land of a Hundred Wonders. How do you nourish your soul?
  
12. The relationship between Gibby and Clever is at times adversarial yet you sense that they'd defend each other to the end. Although not related by blood, the two of them function as sisters. Does your relationship with your sister at all resemble the characters? Do you have a friend with which you have this sort of relationship?
  
13. In keeping with the old time cowboy theme, three of the characters in the book, Sneaky Tim Ray and the Brandish Boys, are stereotypically black-hatted. Do you think people can be born evil or do they behave this way as a result of their experiences?
  
14. Gib endows Keeper with almost magical powers. Why do you think that is?

15. Miss Lydia is a complex character. Discuss her function within the story.
  
16. Gibby's memory, or the lack of it, plays a substantial role in the novel. Can you imagine what it would be like to lose your memory? How much of who we are is based on our past?
  
17. As Gibby says, "Hope springs internal." Has there ever been a time in your life that you feel you would not have had the courage to go on without the belief in a hopeful outcome?
  
18. Janice Lever surprises us in the end. Have you even known anyone who you believed to be of questionable values do a complete turn around?
  
19. At one point in the story, Gibby dispenses eye-for-an-eye justice and is not punished for her actions. Did you find this righteous or offensive?
  
20. Certain relationships within the story were considered taboo, especially during the early 70's. Do you think times have changed?