

## For Discussion:

1. What about the prologue was most important to you as far as understanding Cieli Mae's place, her mission, her capabilities?
2. Let's talk about characters: Cieli Mae, Ruby Pearl, and of course Vidalia. For whom did you feel the most admiration?
3. How would you describe a.) the different mother-daughter relationships in the story: Memaw Veta Sue and Vida Lee; Cieli Mae and Vida Lee; Ruby Pearl and her daughters. b.) The mother-son relationships of Gamma Gert and JB Jackson, Ruby Pearl and Leslie Banks. And, c.) The parent-child relationships of JB to his boys, Grady Bo and Gamma Gert, and Ruben Banks and his children.
4. Were you surprised when spirit child Cieli Mae stepped over prescribed lines, risking her entire mission, when her little brother Elijah was in trouble? Was she being impulsive? In that same instance, what would you have done?
5. Did any of the other significant personalities behave in a way that you might deem out of character?
6. Which character's words and/or actions provide occasional comic relief? Which figure was in the most desperate need of a chill pill?
7. Which of the characters showed the most growth? The least?
8. Did JB's cruelties, the many ways in which he so easily flew off the handle, surprise you? Why was it so easy for him to make Vidalia feel those times were all her fault? Why did she not know any better?
9. How does time and place affect perspectives/feelings of the individuals in the town of Willin Georgia? Compare this to attitudes in your own physical location and current time?
10. Why were both Vidalia and Cieli Mae so drawn to Ruby Pearl? Discuss the differences between Vidalia and Ruby Pearl. The similarities.
11. Regarding her husband's attackers, did Ruby make the right decision? How did her choices affect Vidalia's?
12. What did you think of Sunny, Vidalia's childhood friend, and her belief that "Hate does to the soul what murder does to the body."?
13. Who left the chocolates and the single rose atop Vidalia's locker precipitating another one of JB's violent meltdowns? Why do you think her secret admirer opted to remain anonymous, rather than profess his feelings?
14. What did you think of Gamma Gert's choice of theme music as she cleaned up after her boy's messes?
15. Cieli Mae never once called JB "Daddy"— do you think that was a conscious choice on her part?
16. Do you think Ken Greeley and Vidalia will maintain their friendship well into the future?
17. In hindsight, what red flags were the most notable in the earlier interactions between Memaw and Doc Feldman? Were you surprised by their final revelations? Did it help you to understand why each of them, as individuals, behaved in the ways they did?

18. When Vidalia initially asks if the spirit always has a choice, do you think she understood the true meaning of that supposition?
19. Why will some individuals believe they "don't have a choice" while others fight tooth and nail for their rights?
20. When did Vidalia Lee's perceptions change? At what point did she realize she needed to put an end to any involvement with JB—no ands, ifs, or buts?
21. As time went on Vidalia's interactions with Cieli Mae diminished in direct proportion to Vidalia's inner growth. How did you feel when Vidalia stopped looking to others for support? How were you affected when Cieli Mae acknowledged her mission had been accomplished, that she was no longer needed? How did Cieli Mae's "dissolution" make you feel?
22. It has been said what doesn't kill us makes us stronger. How does that adage apply to this story's outcome?
23. What were you most happy to learn in the Epilogue?
24. Especially for new authors, online reviews are quite important. If you felt strongly about this novel, one way or the other, would you consider leaving the author a brief review on-line?