

The Bequest **Book Group Discussion Guide**

Developed by the author, this discussion guide is designed to accompany your reading, and can be used by Christian and secular book groups alike. Some questions encourage you to compare and contrast your thoughts while reading the book to your thoughts once you have completed the book. To get the most out of the discussion guide, we encourage you to make such comparisons. (For an easy to print version, click on the "download the pdf version" button.)

A. Chapters 1-5

1. What do you think touched Johanna's face when she entered the house? Where do you think a person's spirit goes when the physical body dies? Compare your thoughts with biblical scriptures on the subject.
2. Why did Johanna and her sisters argue over the doll? Is it unusual for adult siblings to revert to roles established in childhood? What roles do you think each of the siblings played as children? (i.e. the smart one, the wild one, quiet one, the pretty one, etc.) What impact do adults have in defining those roles?
3. What lessons do you think Elizabeth Hall's life will yield for the generations to come? (Compare your thoughts as you are reading the novel to your thoughts once you have completed the novel. Discuss again.)
4. What do you think caused the loneliness and fear that Johanna and Eva experienced? Have you experienced similar feelings? If so, what did you attribute them to?
5. The Author begins Chapter 5 with the following verse: *"True is the answer? How well is one loved? Tis' written in tears as death do we mourn. But sadder still does knowledge append, the soul thus mourned does not attend."* What does this verse mean? Does the verse adequately foreshadow Chapter 5?

B. Chapters 6-10

6. What do you think was happening to Johanna as a result of her contact with the doll?
7. Why do you think Johanna did not recognize the nature of the doll? (Compare your thoughts as you read the novel to your thoughts once you have completed the novel. Discuss again.)
8. As a Christian why was Johanna so surprised to see Jason at church? How does her response compare to the responses of Christians you know?
9. What do you think compelled Jason to take an alternate path the day he came across Johanna in the woods? Can you think of an instance in your own life when you felt similarly compelled? What did you attribute it to?
10. How does Lynn's response to her mother's death compare to the response of others you know who grieve the loss of a loved one? What does the Holy Bible say about grief?

C. Chapters 10-15

11. What is the significance of Johanna's dream?
12. Why was Johanna afraid to discuss the existence of demons with Jason? Was her reaction unusual?
13. Do you think people more readily accept the existence of angels than the existence of demons? Why?
14. How does Jason's explanation regarding the influence of demons in the lives of Christians compare with what you believe? What of the influence of demons in the lives of non-Christians? Do you think one must believe in demons to be influenced or affected by them?
15. At times Mrs. Beasley seemed to love Elizabeth and at other times she seemed to hate her. To what do you attribute these conflicting emotions?

D. Chapters 16-20

16. The author implied that Johanna was reluctant to accept Jason's help due to pride. Based on your analysis of Johanna's character and events in the story, why do you think Johanna was reluctant to accept his help?

17. Jason was reminded of a passage of scripture when he knew he had offended Johanna. Do you think God allows offense to highlight areas of our character in need of correction? If so, discuss a time when this happened to you.
18. Why did Elizabeth Hall keep her relationship with Jason a secret from Johanna? What inspired Elizabeth's relationship with Jason. (Compare your thoughts as you read the story to your thoughts once you complete your reading of the story. Discuss again.)
19. What do you think caused Johanna to suppress the memory from her childhood? What was the significance of her actions as a child?
20. Why was Mrs. Beasley reluctant to break her allegiance to Destroyer, although he showed no loyalty to her? Can you think of parallels in your own life?

E. Chapters 21-25

21. In the beginning of Chapter 21, the author quotes a verse of scripture? What do you think the verse means?
22. Why was Pastor Mark reluctant to interfere with Elizabeth Hall and Erma Beasley's relationship?
23. How do current practices of Christians compare to the Christians in the story who mixed Christianity with superstition and witchcraft? Can you think of parallels in your own life?
24. Why do you think Mrs. Beasley was able to finally see the truth about God after resisting for so many years? Can you think of parallels in your own life?
25. Have you ever had any experiences with the occult? How do you think it has affected your life?

Note from the author:

While *The Bequest* is completely a work of fiction, I believe the message of Christ is quite clear within its pages. Thus, this discussion guide is incomplete without the extension of an invitation to those who have not yet accepted Christ as the Lord and Savior of your life. And so, I extend this invitation to you. You need only say this simple prayer:

"Lord, I confess that I am a sinner in need of the salvation only you can offer. I confess with my mouth and believe in my heart that Jesus is the Son of God. I confess all of my sins to you and ask your forgiveness. Lord, I invite you into my heart through the person of your Holy Spirit and ask you to be Lord of my life. In Jesus, name I pray. Amen."

If you decided to say this prayer today, I would like to be the first to say welcome to the Kingdom! You have just made *the* most important decision of your existence!

In love and in His service,

Renée Aikens, J.D.