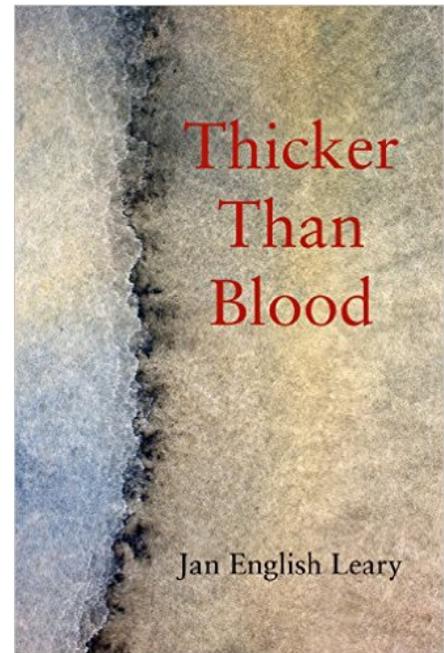


Reading Group Guide

Thicker Than Blood

by Jan English Leary, a novel from [Fomite](#)

Visit Jan's Website janenglishleary.com



Discussion Questions

1. What do the multiple points of view allow?
2. In part, this book is about secrets: secrets people keep from family, secrets of birth. How do secrets affect the characters' lives? How do the secrets and mystery around adoption in particular affect the characters?
3. This book depicts the lives of several mothers. What about motherhood is different for each of them, and how do the differences inform the story? Do you think Pearl will be a good mother?
4. Is Andrea arrogant? Naïve? Hopeful? All three?
5. Adoption is both an overt and covert force in this novel. Discuss.
6. This novel is in part about refugees assimilating into American society. It is also about race relations in America. How does this novel contribute to discussions about these issues in our culture today? Do you believe novels play a role in cultural dialogue?
7. Discuss the role men play in this novel.
8. In what way are place and setting important to this story?
9. Is it important for Pearl to travel? What does being a foreigner mean to Pearl? Does it shape her identity? And if so, how?
10. Generations here repeat or echo each other's actions. Does this create greater empathy among them for each other? Does it give you greater empathy for them?
11. When Pearl and her schoolmates come to work at Breadbasket, we see a different side of Pearl. How does this event shape her?
12. What is important and helpful to Andrea as a mother from her work experience and what is not?
13. How does this book treat family generally and, more specifically, in terms of family structure?
14. Discuss how names are used in this novel.
15. What do you hope for Pearl, her child, and Andrea?