



Colorado Book Club Resource

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR FAIRY TALE BY STEPHEN KING

1. What do you think of King's decision to begin the opening of this book with the death of Charlie's mother on the "goddamn bridge" and his father's battle with alcoholism? How does this influence Charlie's childhood and teenage years?
2. What do you think about Charlie's voice and retrospective point of view? Some of his lingo and phrases speak to older generations, ones that a teenager from the 2010s wouldn't necessarily say. How does this characterization later play out in the novel and what effect does it have for you as a reader?
3. Charlie's dad suffered from alcoholism and recovered through Charlie's help, AA, and a supportive network of friends. How does Charlie's relationship and healing with his father counter with his relationship with Mr. Bowditch?
4. Describe Charlie's relationship with Mr. Bowditch. Besides being at the right place and time to save him after his fall, why does Charlie stick around to be with Mr. Bowditch and Radar? How does Charlie's family history play a role in his decision to be their caretaker?
5. Radar is first described as a mean, frightening dog by Charlie's friend Andy Chen. Yet, when Charlie meets him, he's a much more subdued and trusting dog in old age. Why is that and how does Radar help Charlie's quest into Empis?
6. Mr. Bowditch says to Charlie, "A brave man helps. A coward just gives presents" (page 43). What does this mean to you and why is this quote frequently referenced in the novel?
7. Who is the "ha-ha" man whom Charlie calls Rumpelstiltskin, what is he after, and why is Charlie suspicious of him? What theme or symbol does he represent in the greater story?
8. The first half of the story sets up Charlie's family, Mr. Bowditch and his injury, Radar, and the gold in Mr. Bowditch's safe (among other events) before we enter Empis. Why does the author take longer to set up Charlie's normal world instead of entering straight into the magical one? In your opinion, does this setup help or hinder the story?
9. Ray Bradbury's *Something Wicked This Way Comes* is referenced when Charlie is researching this other world. Read Bradbury's classic. How does *Fairy Tale* pay homage to Bradbury's novel?



This discussion sheet is property of the Colorado State Library's Book Club Resource. Please return this sheet along with all of the books in the book bag to the Colorado State Library – Courier Code C912. Contact bookclub@coloradovirtuallibrary.org with questions or concerns.



Colorado Book Club Resource

10. Charlie travels to Empis to journey to the magical city and use the sundial's life-altering effects to save Radar. Why does he take that risk, knowing Mr. Bowditch's history, the dangers within this world, and after meeting its people?
11. Portals into secondary worlds play a key role throughout the novel. Mr. Bowditch did his utmost to keep the well away from the eyes of people who could exploit this other world. Compare the deep well and cavern into Empis with other portal fantasies. How does the author expand the portal fantasy genre, and how is this book similar? What are you hoping to see more of in this fantasy genre?
12. By the end of the novel, how has Charlie grown as a person? Why does he feel the need to tell this story to the reader, and how does he use his experience to grow personally and professionally?
13. In writing Fairy Tale, Stephen King asked himself a question: "What could you write that would make you happy?" What are some of the happiest and most fun moments in this story? What exciting elements or tropes of fantasy and fairy tale are you most drawn to?

Discussion questions provided by the publisher.



This discussion sheet is property of the Colorado State Library's Book Club Resource. Please return this sheet along with all of the books in the book bag to the Colorado State Library – Courier Code C912. Contact bookclub@coloradovirtuallibrary.org with questions or concerns.