

BOOK GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

For

The Foster Girls

by Lin Stepp

1. Why did Vivian Delaney travel such a long distance from California to the mountains of Tennessee as a resolution to her problems? Do you think a move or change can be a positive help for difficulties?
2. What were your first impressions of Scott Jamison? What were Vivian's? How did Vivian come to be staying in Scott's grandmother's farmhouse?
3. Despite the attraction between Scott and Vivian, there are multiple problems that hinder the development of their relationship. What are some of these?
4. What things do Vivian and Ellen Greene have in common that cause them to become friends? Ellen suggests it may be difficult for women with an extensive education or less gender-traditional occupations to be as socially accepted by others. Do you think this is true?
5. For many individuals, reading the descriptions of Buckeye Knob Camp bring back memories of summer camp visits. Did you go to camp as a child? Are these memories good ones for you? Why did Scott love the camp so much?
6. Scott ridicules the notion that Vivian might still be a virgin at her age in this contemporary time. Do you think our social norms have changed regarding premarital sex? How does this make it difficult for young people in relation to their individual morals or beliefs?
7. How does Vivian's visit to the church cemetery and talk with the minister, Reverend James, help her confusions and concerns? What issues of faith did they discuss?

8. A big mystery in this book concerns the secret identity of the popular Foster Girls books and television show. When did you first think character Vivian Delaney and elusive author Viva Leeds might be one and the same?

9. Vivian suggests to Scott at one point that he has few life problems, and exceptional self-esteem, because his life has always been easy and comfortable. How are the backgrounds of these two individuals different? Do you believe factors in an individual's past can affect their confidence and sense of self-worth?

10. We often read stories about people meeting angels unaware. How did the black woman Vivian met at the bus station, while escaping the Patterson's foster home, act like an angel of mercy? Have you ever had a stranger unexpectedly help you?

11. How does Vivian meet young Sarah Taylor? What draws them together and causes them to bond?

12. Why do you think Scott became so angry when he learned Vivian's true identity? Do you think it is right for authors to write books under pseudonyms? What reasons did Vivian give for doing this?

13. Using the example of petals of a flower, Scott explains that individuals have different parts, identities, and selves, all making up a valuable and beautiful whole. What different identities did Vivian and Scott discuss? What are some of the parts that make up your whole? Do you value and nurture them all?

14. How did Vivian learn about her Delaney relatives? Do you think it helped Vivian to connect with some of her family? How did connecting with Vivian help the Delaney's?

15. Vivian and Scott's relationship is threatened by Vivian's growing bond to Sarah Taylor. Why? What do each want? Can you give an argument for both Scott's and Vivian's perspective on this issue?

16. What critical event brings the problems between Vivian and Scott to a head? What things help Scott change his mind about being a foster parent to Sarah?

17. Some sweet honesty occurs between Scott and Sarah Taylor in the rescue scene at the big oak. How were both candid with each other? Do you think honesty is important in relationships with children?

18. In looking back, what was your favorite part of this book? Who were your favorite major and minor characters? What aspects of the book will you remember most?

