

VANISH

BOOK DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever lived in a small town like Vanish? Would you care to?
2. Have you ever lived on or visited an Indian reservation? If so what are your observations?
3. Both Ted and Russ seem willing to cut corners when necessary, while hunting, for instance, with the law generally, and in other matters of life and love. How much of this behavior is the product of their own natures, and how much might derive from the rough-and-tumble atmosphere of Vanish?
4. What are your thoughts about oil extraction, fracking, and the oil boom-&-bust phenomenon in general?
5. If you owned land with potentially some millions of dollars of oil beneath the surface, would you allow oil companies to drill and develop the resource?
6. What do you make of Ted's struggles to see matters through to the finish, whether during his college years, or his early years in Minneapolis, or in his marriage and personal life?
7. Russ seems to play an almost fatherly role for Ted. Is his influence over Ted a good thing? Is there really anything Russ doesn't know about Ted?
8. The one thing Ted seems to be good at is his work. Why is he apparently highly competent there but not in other avenues of life?
9. What do you think of Ted's relationship with his daughter Ginnie Lee?
10. Why would Mercy marry a man like Ray? Why would she stay with him?
11. What does Mercy see in Ted? What does he see in her?
12. What do you think about the interactions of whites and Indians in the novel? Are they about what you would have expected? Better? Worse? Are they believable?
13. What if anything has Ted learned by the end of the novel? Anything? What has he gained? Lost? What will he do now?
14. What will Allison do in the years ahead? Mercy? How about Russ?
15. Would you say this book is mostly about conflict? Betrayal? Money? Or love?