

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Under the Bayou Moon

By Valerie Fraser Luesse

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1. The author has said she thinks of the bayou setting of this novel almost like a main character. Do you agree? Why or why not?
2. What kinds of details make a setting come to life for you as a reader?
3. What first attracted you to the book?
4. Who was your favorite character? Your least favorite?
5. During supper with Ellie, young Remy notices that she doesn't genuflect after saying grace. That sparks a brief discussion in which Ellie explains religion as a language for talking to God. Do you think that's true?
6. Ellie is appalled that school authorities have attempted to rob Cajun children of their native language. How much does the way we speak—language, dialect, or even accent—have to do with our own personal identity?
7. How does the author address racial inequalities in the book?
8. Why is Ellie so disturbed by her first sighting of the white alligator?
9. What's significant about Ellie and Heywood's last trip to New Orleans together, before Raphe returns from a long absence? Did you wish their trip had ended differently? Why or why not?
10. Who were you more drawn to—Raphe or Heywood? Why?
11. What do you think a remote, rural town like tiny Bernadette, Louisiana, can teach modern readers?
12. Have you ever been someplace that touched your soul the way Louisiana touches Ellie's?
13. What does the white alligator signify to you?

