

Hot Season: A Book Club Guide

The following questions are designed to make book club discussions more fun and rewarding. We hope this guide adds to your enjoyment and appreciation of the book.

Questions and Topics for Discussion:

1. Which of these characters do you identify the most with? Why?
2. In *Hot Season*, modern “eco-terrorists” are likened to the outlaws of the Old West. What distinguishes these two groups from regular, garden-style criminals? How are they alike—and how are they different?
3. What is the strongest you have ever felt about a cause? Why?
4. Do you think the sort of “monkey wrenching” employed by Dyson Lathe and others like him can be effective in protecting the natural world? Why or why not?
5. *Hot Season* is a coming-of-age novel. Where do you see the four main characters—Rell, Katie, Jenna, and Michelle—going in their lives? In five years? In ten?
6. What is your favorite scene in this book? Why?

7. In Chapter Four, “Entrapment,” there’s a scene in which Jenna is saying one thing while thinking another. How does this dynamic relate to her character overall?

8. In the prologue, we learn a bit about Katie’s backstory, desires, and rationale. How do these elements play out in her decisions as the book unfolds?

9. At the end of the novel, Rell has decided to apply for an internship at the Central Arizona Water Alliance rather than take the safe job she thought she was looking for. What events in the story push her in that direction?

10. In the end, both Rell and Katie have made sacrifices—or attempted to make sacrifices—on behalf of the Greene River. How is Rell’s sacrifice different from Katie’s? How is it the same?

11. At the end, Rell and Arin have made a connection. Do you think this connection is romantic or platonic? Where do you see their relationship headed?

12. The theme of fire plays out in many ways throughout the novel. What are some of the “real” instances of fire? What are some of the metaphorical ones?

13. Have you ever known anyone who was not who they appeared to be? Who were they, and what were they hiding? Why?

14. In this book, 737 Sycamore St. is a kind of character in and of itself. What was your most memorable living situation from your early twenties?

16. This book is set in the mid-aughts, in the politically charged climate in the U.S. following 9/11 and the subsequent invasion of Iraq. How does the political climate from that time compare to the political climate today?

The Facts behind the Fiction

The character Dyson Lathe is loosely based on the real-life activist and “eco-terrorist” Bill Rogers. You can learn more about his life and times in Vanessa Grigoriadis’s 2011 feature for *Rolling Stone*, “The Rise and Fall of the Eco-Radical Underground.”

<http://www.rollingstone.com/culture/news/the-rise-fall-of-the-eco-radical-underground-20110621>

The struggle to save the (fictitious) Greene River is loosely based on the real-life struggle to save Arizona’s Verde River. You can read more about that struggle in Alisa Blackwood’s 2001 article for the *LA Times*, “Thirsty Towns' Pumping Proposal Provokes Water Fight in Arizona.”

<http://articles.latimes.com/2001/feb/11/local/me-23999>