

QUESTIONS FOR READING GROUPS

1. Andra's walk started as a marketing tool. It became so much more. How did the walk change her relationship with her father, her mother?
2. Is it part of growing up to fight our parents for our independence?
3. What was the condition of the Natchez Trace? What has budget cuts done to this historical trail? Could this serve as a warning for what is happening to our state parks, our national parks?
4. The walk is also about trying to make a dream come true? What does her father say about his dreams?
5. What did you think of the songs heading the chapters? Did you know any? Did you find yourself singing some of them?
6. Roy bought an antique table. Do any of you have antiques? Do any of your antiques have a story? Do you agree with Roy's saying "Every piece of junk's got a beautiful soul. It just takes the right person to coax it out?"
7. Did her relationship with her father disturb you in any way? How hard is it to face the aging and the deterioration of our parents? What does it have to do with our own aging?
8. Andra says a lot of trash along the way. What do you think of her observation that trash is "neglected bits of humanity tossed along a forgotten highway."
9. What dangers and hardships did she face? Physical challenges, especially the feet, bobcat, creepy man, weather-rain, wind, wild dogs. What was your reaction when she found out at the end that the Trace employees had been watching out for her?
10. Andra recalls historical events and brings up Meriwether Lewis as an inspiration. Why do you think Meriwether Lewis haunts her life?
11. She also tells us that she had imaginary friends, thinks of ghosts of souls on the trace, that parts of the Trace are haunted. Have you ever visited a place where you felt spirits were still there.
12. We see a change in her mission, attitude, and relationships with the cardinal and the daffodil. What gifts did Andra give her father by walking the Trace? What gifts did Roy give her? What memories did they make? What memories can we make in our lives?

*****Questions courtesy of reader Jane Nispel, Waupaca, Wisconsin.