

Skokie Public Library's Book Discussion Guide

Montana 1948 by Larry Watkins

- What motivates Frank Hayden's final act? (The author has characterized it as both a selfish and a selfless act.)
- Late in the novel, Gail Hayden changes her attitude. She no longer wants her husband to continue the course of action that earlier she encouraged him to follow. What causes her to change?
- What does Wesley Hayden mean by his admonishment not to "blame Montana"?
- A great deal of attention is paid to locating Bentrack (a fictional community) on the map. Why? What role does the setting play in the novel?
- Whose story is this? Wesley's? David's? Why?
- Who is the moral center of the story? Why?
- How does prejudice play into the story?
- Why is Wesley Hayden especially concerned when his son David tells him that Len McAuley might "know something"?
- What would the outcome of the story have been had David's father publicly arrested his uncle? Would things have turned out better? Worse? Would you have done the same thing as Wesley had it been your family?
- Was there any justice for the crimes committed by Uncle Frank?
- Most of the novel's action takes place in 1948. Why did the author choose that year? Could the events occur today?
- In what ways is the novel about privilege and the abuse of power?
- What is the effect of David Hayden telling this story so many years after the fact?



Skokie Public Library

5215 Oakton Street
Skokie, Illinois 60077
847.673.7774 / 847.673.7797 fax
www.skokielibrary.info

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