

## First Thursday Book Club Discussion Questions

### Title: **Gemini**

September 2018, 2 pm. Lorraine Wheeler hosts.  
Diane Grubel leads the discussion.

1. Why does Charlotte feel such a strong sense of responsibility for Jane Doe? How does she balance her protective feelings for Jane with her practical understanding of Jane's prognosis?
2. From the moment she first sees Bo, Raney is acutely aware of the differences in their circumstances. How does her sensitivity about her background affect their relationship over the years? In what ways do they have more in common than she thinks? Why is their childhood attachment so enduring?
3. Charlotte sees her job as giving nature "as much time as possible". In practice, what does that mean? How does it influence her feelings about Jane's care and the appointment of a guardian ad litem?
4. How does the small town of Quentin, with its natural beauty and financial struggles, shape Raney's life? In what ways does she identify as a small town girl, and in what ways does she resent that role?
5. Charlotte and Eric's relationship is haunted by her desire to have a child, and his reluctance to do so. Why is the subject so difficult for them to discuss? Why does Charlotte feel they have stalled?
6. What reasons does Raney give for marrying Cleet? Would she have made the same decision if she were not pregnant? How is her understanding of love and loyalty shaped by her marriage to him?
7. How does Eric's awareness of his neurofibromatosis, and the brushes with death it caused, influence his life? What choices does he make as a result? What boundaries does he lay down? Are his boundaries intended for his own protection or for others'?
8. As a child, Raney makes do with scavenged house paint for her art. How does that same make-do attitude manifest in her adult life?
9. What is the significance of Raney burning her paintings when her grandfather's farm is sold? Why is this a turning point in her life as much as her grandfather's?

10. Does Charlotte go too far by seeking David out and by trying to uncover Jake's paternity? Does her involvement with Raney compromise her objectivity?

11. When she was a child, Raney's grandfather taught her to light a campfire "with one match and her own wits" (229). Does Raney take his lesson about self-sufficiency to heart? At what points does she fail to follow his advice?

12. What prompts Raney to marry David? Why does she ignore her growing misgivings and stay with him? Do you think David was responsible for the hit-and-run?

13. Why do you think the author chose Gemini, the zodiac sign represented by twins, as the title of the novel? How does she develop the theme established by the title? What characters or events are "twinned"?

14. *Gemini* contains several mysteries: Jane Doe's identity, whether the hit-and-run was accidental or intentional, Jake's parentage, and others. Was there a particular revelation that you found most surprising or satisfying? What devices did the author use to maintain suspense?

15. Discuss the role of genetics in the novel. How does Eric's "fatal flaw" link the characters? Eric wrote in his editorial that knowledge of your genetic code could be more damaging than helpful; is that true for Jake? Would you rather know if your genetics carried a "fatal flaw" or not?

16. *Gemini* raises challenging questions about our fear of death and our willingness to confront or discuss it. Did you react differently to Jane Doe's situation than you did to that of Raney's grandfather? How would you answer the question that Eric poses to Charlotte: "Should quantity of life always trump quality?" Did reading *Gemini* stir you to look more closely at your own feelings about death?