



# *The Book of Ruth*

by Jane Hamilton

Announced in October 10, 1996

## Discussion Questions

1. Ruth's story is particularly poignant because of the way she conveys so much that is beyond her understanding. What are the differences between what Ruth tells us and what we infer about her life and the people in it? How does Hamilton achieve this?
2. How do you respond to Ruth's naiveté? Does her lack of understanding about the people in her life frustrate you? Or does her innocence make her more sympathetic?
3. May is in many ways a monstrous character in Ruth's life. What about her, if anything, makes her seem more human? Do you see any of May in Ruth?
4. How does Ruth get caught between May and Ruby? Does Justy's birth improve the situation for her at all?
5. Daisy is a puzzling character because of the way she seems so comfortable in the world of the novel, even while she remains distinct and apart from everyone in the world. How is her friendship important to Ruth? Is she as well drawn as the other characters in the book?
6. The Book of Ruth's climax is hinted at subtly (and not so subtly) throughout the novel. What effect does this type of foreshadowing have on your reading? Does it add to or diminish the impact of the events when they finally occur?
7. How do you respond to Ruth's attitude toward Ruby at the end of the book?