



# FALLEN MOUNTAINS

*A Novel by*

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Which character, if any, did you identify with most in this novel? Why?

Red is haunted by the Faulkner quote, “The past is never dead. It isn’t even past,” but all of the characters in this novel are wrestling with their histories. What do you think about this quote? Can we ever truly free ourselves from our past? Do we need to?

In your opinion, do the characters of *Fallen Mountains* all come to terms with their pasts?

The town of Fallen Mountains is a place that liberates, inspires, and traps its inhabitants. In what ways do you see that playing out in the novel? How do family and community dynamics play out in your own life?

Whereas Transom argues that he has to “revitalize” the Hardy farm in order to make it sustainable, Chase wants to keep the farm as it has always been. In the novel, we are positioned to side largely with Chase, but these tensions do exist in real life, as does the struggle to sort them out. In your own experience, how have you seen these types of tensions—new versus old, innovation versus tradition, conservation versus consumerism—play out?

Mick tells Red that all human beings have the capacity to do bad things—that everyone has a breaking point and can snap. Do you agree or disagree?

This novel is in many ways about silence. Possum doesn’t tell a soul about Transom’s bullying. Red doesn’t tell anyone about finding Transom and Possum at the shale pit. Chase struggles to express even his positive feelings toward Laney. In contrast, Jack and Maggie made it a life practice of expressing themselves. When is silence better than speaking, in your experience? Which characters do you relate with most in deciding what to say and not say?

Afraid that he will lose himself as he did with the grief over his parents’ death, Chase decides to shut down his emotions. It is, he reasons, the only safe way to navigate life. Could you relate to his decision?

Laney ultimately decides she wants a stable and predictable life with Chase. What do you think of her decision to keep her romantic history with Transom a secret?

*Fallen Mountains* positions its characters in a number of morally “gray” areas. For instance, Red makes a decision to save his son at the expense of someone else. What did you think of this?

Similarly, although Possum chooses not to outright harm Transom when he has the opportunity to do so, he also doesn’t help him. In your opinion, does Possum bear some culpability for what happens to Transom? Does he have a moral responsibility to help him?

At the end of the novel, Possum wonders whether holding onto his anger and bitterness ultimately has cost *him* more than it has anyone else. What do you think? Is forgiveness freeing? In a similar vein, are some actions unforgivable?

Are there any innocent characters in this novel? If so, who?