

Where The Crawdads Sing Book Club Discussion Questions

1. The North Carolina marsh where Kya lives has long been a sanctuary for outsiders. How does this setting shape the novel, and did the setting impact your reading enjoyment? How does growing up in this isolation affect Kya?
2. The story starts with Kya's Ma leaving and Kya waiting for her to come back. Why do you think Kya's mother leaves in the beginning? Do you agree with her decision? A letter came from Kya's mother, but Kya could not read it. What impact do you think it would have made on her life if she had been able to read it? Do you think Kya's future would have been different?
3. Kya's dad started taking her out on the boat. Do you think that it was a turning point in their relationship? Why did he leave?
4. Kya went to school for one day, but then she decided to not go back. Why does Kya choose not to go back to school? Was it the right decision? How different would her life be if she had gone to school? How does Kya's lack of formal education shape her vision of the world?
5. Kya often [watches](#) the other young people from town—she even nicknames them "Tallskinnyblonde, Ponytailfreckleface, Shortblackhair, Alwayswearspearls, and Roundchubbycheeks" (p. 80). What does Kya learn from observing these girls? Why do you think she keeps her watching secret? Do you agree with Kya's secrecy?
6. Later Jodie, then her Pa, also left. How do you think abandonment shaped Kya's outlook in life? What repercussions did it have? Why did Jodie come back in the end and what does she learn from him?
7. After Jodie and Pa leave Kya alone, she becomes close to Jumpin' and Mabel. Why are these two adults drawn to Kya? What do they teach her about the world? Do you agree with Jumpin's decision to protect Kya from social services (p. 110) and to encourage her to live alone in the marsh? Why or why not? Could you survive alone all those years in the marsh? Do you think it's plausible for Kya to raise herself at such a young age?
8. How is womanhood explored throughout the novel? What does being a woman mean to Kya? How does she relate to the other women in Barkley Cove?
9. Discuss Kya's relationship with Tate. How does Tate's understanding of Kya change over time? Is Tate a good partner for Kya? Why or why not? Kya believed Tate never came back to see her after he left for college? How does this impact her future actions/next relationship?
10. Tate's father tells him that poems are important because "they make ya feel something" (p. 48). What does poetry mean to Tate? What does it mean to Kya? How does poetry help Kya throughout the novel?

11. On page 142, Kya watches the fireflies near her shack, and notices that the females can change their flashes to signal different things. What does this realization mean to Kya? What does it teach her about relationships? How does this lesson influence Kya's decisions in the second half of the novel?

12. Discuss how Kya's observations of nature shape her vision of the world. Do you think these lessons adequately prepare her for life in Barkley Cove? Do you think human society follows the same rules as the natural world? Should it? Why or why not?

13. Is Chase a different kind of man than Tate? If so, how are they different? Is one man better? Do you think that their differences are biological or learned? How does Kya see each man? Why did Kya stay with Chase for so long? What did you think about Kya and Tate's relationship? Did you think that they would end up together? Do you think they were compatible? How did their relationship change over the years? How does Tate's view of Kya change over time?

14. By the end of the novel, Kya has come to realize...

Most of what she knew, she'd learned from the wild. Nature had nurtured, tutored, and protected her when no one else would. If consequences resulted from her behaving differently, then they too were functions of life's fundamental core (p. 363).

What does she mean? Do you agree with her philosophy? What do you think it means to be a good person? Do you think Kya is a good person? Why or why not? In what ways does her status as an "outsider" change how others see her?

15. Were you surprised by the verdict in the Chase's murder [trial](#)? What about by the ending of the novel? Do you agree with Tate's final decision? Why or why not? Were you surprised by any of the events in the book?

(Some questions issued by the publisher, some from www.arlenesbookclub.com)

