

The Berry Pickers by Amanda Peters

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS HERE** (Ideally 10 questions to guide discussion of the title):

1. Amanda Peters has said that the opening line, "The day Ruthie went missing, the blackflies seemed to be especially hungry," came to her, and the rest of the book followed. How did this line set the scene? What expectations did it give you for the story, and were those fulfilled?
2. What did you think of the narrative style? Did having the dual perspective enhance your experience of the story? Which character's voice was most relatable? Were there other characters whose perspectives you would have liked to have heard? How did the choices the author made around voice impact your understanding of the characters' journeys?
3. Which characters did you find the most compelling or relatable? Why?
4. Joe reminisces about the family’s annual trip from Canada to Maine for the blueberry harvest. How does this tradition shape the family dynamics, and how does it contribute to the overall atmosphere of the novel?
5. When did you figure out the relationship between the two storylines, and how did it make you feel? Have you ever discovered a family secret? How did it change your relationship with the people around you?
6. After Ruthie goes missing, what do you think keeps the remaining family members bound together? What do you think pulls them apart?
7. How does Ruthie's disappearance echo tragedies and atrocities in the broader history of Indigenous peoples? Have you learned more since reading the book?
8. What did you think was the hardest part of the novel to read?
9. Amanda Peters has Mi’kmaq heritage. Did you find that her voice came through clearer in her Indigenous characters as a result?
10. You might say this story is ultimately about forgiveness. Which characters need forgiveness? Which character are you most willing to forgive? Are you able to find all the major characters redeemable in some way, or are there any you cannot forgive?
11. The novel comes full circle with its message about truth, forgiveness, and healing. How does the conclusion of the story resonate with the themes introduced in the opening scenes?