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©Book Report or Discussion Guide - 2009

*PRESCRIPTION FOR FINDING HOME IN ALASKA*

**By Naomi Gaede-Penner**

Many of the questions are general, rather than chapter-specific. You will find it helpful to look over the questions before you begin reading; and then refer to them as each chapter is completed. Keep a notebook and jot down responses as you encounter them throughout the book.

QUESTIONS

1. The book uses the term “home place.” What does this mean to you? Why is it an integral part of the story? What tension is involved for Naomi in “finding a home place”?
2. How many times have you moved? How do you think that has affected you?
3. The author frequently flashes back to the “home place” in Kansas. What purpose does this serve?
  - a. Juxtaposes Kansas and Alaska.
  - b. Illustrates how we idealize the “good ol’ days.”
  - c. Demonstrates how we can get stuck in the past and forget to look to the future.
  - d. Adds to the story – or – sidetracks the story.
4. Which character do you most closely identify with: Doc, Ruby, Naomi, or Ruth. Explain.
5. Ruby coped with lack of conveniences. Some of these occurred because of life in the 1950s and others because of remoteness. Identify the lack of conveniences, i.e. dryer, TV, email, etc. Which would be most disconcerting for you? Explain.
6. If fresh produce were unavailable, what would you miss most?
7. Mennonite tradition and culture is threaded through the story. Do you find it intriguing? Distracting? Overdone? Unnecessary? Vital to understanding the Gaede family? Other?
8. Compare the traits of farmers to homesteaders. Discuss the similarities and differences.
9. Notice that Naomi had a friend in every location except Browning. What difference do you think that made?
10. What is your reaction to the assault on Doc? How do you feel as you read about it? Why/why not should the author have included this? (chp. 4)

11. What feelings do you experience when you read the following sections?
  - a. Naomi and her Browning depression. (chp.4)
  - b. Ruth when she learns the family will be moving from Tulare, California to Soldotna, Alaska. (chp. 5)
  - c. Ruby when she drops the cherry mooss on the garage floor of the Clinic House. (chp.7)
12. What personality and character traits do you most admire in Doc, Ruby, Naomi, Ruth? What are your impressions of Mark? Mishal?
13. Which of the family members really find home in Alaska?
14. If you were a character in the story, how would you have portrayed yourself? Survivor? Victim? Hero? Adventurer? True homesteader? City-boy/girl lost in the wilderness? Nature-lover? Reporter? Other\_\_\_\_\_?
15. What character or personality traits do you have that would have made you adaptable to living in the village of Tanana or homesteading on the Kenai Peninsula?

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