

The header image features a vibrant, fiery orange and red background. On the left side, there is a black silhouette of a windmill with a bird flying above it. In the center, the text 'Book Club Discussion Questions' is written in a large, white, sans-serif font. Below this, the title 'After The Fire – Will Hill' is written in a smaller, yellow, sans-serif font. The bottom of the image shows a black silhouette of a house and some trees.

Book Club Discussion Questions

After The Fire – Will Hill

1. The novel jumps between Before and After the fire. How did this non-chronological narrative affect your reading? Do you think the story could have been told chronologically, or in a different way? Why do you think the author decided to do this?
2. Is it possible to feel empathy towards Luke, or understand his actions? Why, or why not?
3. Consider the portrayals of Doctor Hernandez and Agent Carlyle. Through Moonbeam's eyes, we meet them in their professional roles, though over the course of the story, elements of their outside lives seem to drip into the sessions. What did you think of both men? Discuss the differences and similarities in their approaches to Moonbeam.
4. Discuss your thoughts on Moonbeam's mom; can you understand why she left her daughter? Did she have any other options? What did you think of her decision to support Father John's choice of Moonbeam as a future wife?
5. Moonbeam's life has been spent inside the Base, "protected" by the Fence. But when she's taken to the George W. Bush Memorial Center, the nurses lock her in her room except for when she attends her sessions. Consider the idea of "imprisonment". Is Moonbeam a prisoner at the centre? Was she a prisoner at the Base? Is there a difference?
6. Did you know anything about the Waco siege before you read the book? What do you think of novels which take a real-life event as their starting point? Do you believe that fiction can be a helpful tool in addressing or redressing horrific real-life events such as the Waco siege?
7. The idea of cults seems to hold an allure for readers and writers alike; what do you think it is about the mentality of a cult — both looking at the leaders and the followers — that is so fascinating to us? Are there any other books you've read which address similar issues? How did they do this?
8. Moonbeam comments of Father John, "For years and years it was the only voice that mattered, the only source of truth in a world full of lies" and the boundaries between truths and lies are examined continuously over the course of the novel. Can something such as "truth" be subjective? If one person believes something to be true, does this make it so? Discuss your thoughts on the idea of truth versus lies, looking at both the text and thinking about the wider scope of the question.
9. Towards the end of the novel, Agent Carlyle comments of the members of the Base: "I've seen their photos, these men and women who paid with their lives for putting their faith in the wrong person, and I look at them and I don't think they were stupid or vicious or weak. I think they were misled, and I think what happened to them could happen to anybody, given the right set of circumstances." Do you think this is true? Could it happen to anybody?
10. Discuss your feelings about the end of the novel. Did you think this was a fitting ending for Moonbeam and her mother?

