

The Care and Feeding of Ravenously Hungry Girls by Anissa Gray Discussion Questions

1. Early in the novel, Althea says, "I used to think I was like a river. A mighty force of nature." What does she mean by this, and how does her view of herself change by the end of the novel?
2. Why do you think Baby Viola is Althea's favored child? How does this affect Baby Vi, and what does it mean for Kim, who is so at odds with her mother?
3. Even in death, the presence of the Butler parents can be felt throughout the story. How do parental relationships affect each of the sisters and Joe?
4. How do you think Baby Vi and Kim will be affected by the long-term incarceration of their parents?
5. The relationships between Althea, Viola, Lillian, and Joe range from being warm to being incredibly fraught. How do the siblings understand or misunderstand one another in crucial ways?
6. Discuss Althea's relationship with her mother and the significance of the Bible Althea later sends to Lillian.
7. The sisters all undergo transformations over the course of the novel. Discuss the critical changes each sister experiences and what led up to those moments.
8. When Lillian, who has been the caregiver for her nieces, urges Viola to take the girls, Viola is resistant. Compare the ways in which the sisters view and approach their family commitments and how that changes over time.
9. While family relationships are at the heart of the novel, friendships are crucially important as well. Which friendship pairings—Lillian and Nai Nai; Viola and David; Althea and Mercedes—were most resonant?
10. Late in the novel, Viola says, "I'm thinking of how limits become limber. Pliable, when pressed with the thing in you that cries out, endlessly, More, please." Discuss how this applies to each of the characters and the title of the book.
(Questions issued by the publisher.)