

Discussion Questions for *Ordinary Grace*

by *William Kent Krueger*

1. After the early deaths of Bobby Cole and the “itinerant,” the narrator telegraphs that there is another, more significant death to come. Why do you think the author choose to tell us what was coming instead of letting the story unfold without that information? (*Sarah Barnett*)
2. Why do you suppose Krueger decided to populate his novel with so many disabled people—a blind man, a deaf woman, a stutterer, a girl with a hair lip? How does this contribute to the overall story? (*Judy Catterton; Kim Burnett*) Along those lines, there are a ton of characters in this novel. Any that you found unnecessary? (*Maribeth Fischer*)
3. How important is the setting (a small town in the 1960's) to the story? (*Judy Catterton*)
4. The characters in the book begin at different places in the process of loss. How do the specific episodes in which innocence is lost contribute to Krueger’s overall purpose? What about those choices that show characters pushing back against the potential despair of loss? (*Tom Hoyer*)
5. I think the author's most interesting choice is how he uses the character of Jake to help Frank figure out his world. When Frank makes decisions about what to say and what not to say to Jake, he is making a decision about who he is. I don't think the story would have worked had Frank not had his brother to talk to, to react to. Agree or disagree? (*Kim Burnett*)
6. The author allows Frank to overhear private conversations (a lot!) to propel the tale in a way I've not read before. It seemed to me a neat trick to handle the POV. Thoughts? (*Kim Burnett*)
7. There is a ton of religion in this book—we actually get a sermon (**page 194-195**) and yet I don’t believe this was classified as a “Christian Book,” nor did I (not religious) ever feel “preached to.” I’m curious how the author did this. Was it the choice of narrator (young boy) that kept this from feeling as if there were a Christian agenda or “message” to be delivered? The large cast of flawed characters? Other techniques/choice? I can see how a lesser writer, even if he didn’t intend to proselytize, could have fallen into that trap. (*Maribeth Fischer*)