

FINDING TRANQUILITY BASE

By Janet Rebhan

SUGGESTED STUDY QUESTIONS FOR READING GROUPS & BOOK CLUBS

1. The Vietnam era was a turbulent one in American politics and society. Examine the novel through a historical lens. How does the novel expose the concerns of the times?
2. How do you think fear, as defined by Doug in the scene with Riley in Chapter 38, contributes to war between nations?
3. Would you say that Doug understood the true meaning of love?
4. Did Johnny truly love Riley, or was it just a crush? On what do you base your answer?
5. Analyze the character motivations for Riley's mom, Deirdre. What do you think motivated her actions?
6. What was the significance between Deirdre Pritchard and roses?
7. Do you think Grammie was fair with her assessment of her own daughter?
8. What did Grammie mean by the "fine line between forgiveness and denial"?
9. Was the character Shirley Langley a good person or a deceitful one? Why or why not?
10. Did you think Pastor Langley was self serving? What motivated his actions?
11. In what ways did the main character Riley Pritchard evolve and change over the course of the novel?
12. What significance do you think the lunar landing had on the story?
13. Examine the significance of the title. What are some possible explanations for it? How does it reflect Riley's personal search for stability?
14. What do you think Frank Beasley meant when he said in his notation that Riley also knew what it was like to live with the shadow?
15. Is grief a necessary part of life? Explain how grief is portrayed as a major theme in the novel.

16. Examine the author's use of foreshadowing in the novel. How does the use of this literary device further the plot? Give three specific instances where foreshadowing is used, along with an explanation of its effectiveness in moving the plot forward.
17. What is the significance of Katie (Riley's sister) and the naming of Riley's daughter, Katie? What significance do you find in the two Katies appearing in the novel at approximately the same age?
18. It is clear that Riley shows interest in several men throughout the novel. The author directs our attention repeatedly to the eyes of these men, as Riley perceives them. Explain how eyes communicate, and why so much is revealed through our eyes.
19. Is Riley a reliable narrator? Explain the limitations of a first-person narrator and give reasons to support your answer about Riley.