

THE LAST DAY, by James Landis

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR READING-GROUPS

1. What did you think when Warren first meets Ray and is sure he's meeting Jesus? What made him believe Ray was Jesus? Do you?
2. Ray/Jesus tells War, "We all have two birthdays." What are those birthdays? How do they differ? What are their meanings in our lives?
3. What could make Wesley Pease so suspicious and untrusting of books? What does he mean when he says, "Don't go into any house that has more books than guns. You could get badly hurt"? And, "an empty bookcase holds more wisdom than all the libraries in the world"?
4. What does Mr. Smith mean when he says, "Words are divine"? How is this statement borne out in this novel?
5. Discuss Warren's feelings about Mr. Smith. If Warren's father had been a different sort of person, would Warren have felt the same way about Mr. Smith?
6. What does War mean when he says, "I had no idea that God loves us so much"? What are your own beliefs on this matter?
7. Should War and Bethie have married? Why didn't they? Why did War shut himself off from her when he went off to fight in Iraq?
8. Why do you think War's mother took her own life? Did she realize she would lose him?
9. How does Dodie change War's attitude toward life on Earth?
10. Are you surprised to learn that Jesus appears in the Koran? What roles does that holy book play in this novel and in the life of War?
11. Why is Ray/Jesus so interested in the natural and physical world, "the things they call the things of this world"? Things like rocks and flowers and birds and stars.
12. How is Wesley Pease's attitude toward animals reflected in his attitude toward people? How do these attitudes change over the course of the book and why?
13. War asks Jesus if Earth is the only place in the universe with life as we know it. How does Jesus answer? What do you think?
14. Are you comforted by the idea that Jesus might spend your last day on earth with you? Do you think he will?