

WINGSHOOTERS

NINA REVOYR

READING GROUP GUIDE

1. Charlie LeBeau helps people in his community, and is a loving caretaker to Mikey. Yet he is also one of the men most deeply involved in the effort to intimidate the Garretts. How can all of these qualities exist in one man? Do you consider him a good person or a bad person?
2. *Wingshooters* is set in 1974, during the Boston bus crisis, at the end of the Vietnam War, and just after the Civil Rights movement. How do national and world events influence the things that happen in the novel?
3. Mikey is half-Japanese, and lived in Japan for several years. When she moves to Deerhorn, she is not welcomed by many people in town. Why are people unfriendly to her? Do you know of situations where people have been unkind to children, or where kids have been unkind to each other? What kind of impact can this sort of experience have on a child?
4. Charlie and Stewart LeBeau disagree about many things. Do you understand the decisions that Stewart makes? Do you sympathize with him in his conflict with his father? Why or why not? How do Charlie and Stewart conform to the expectations of men of their respective generations? How do they differ from those expectations?
5. What are some of the benefits of a small, tight-knit community like Deerhorn? What are some of the things that are less ideal?
6. Charlie, Uncle Pete, Earl, Ray and their friends are “men’s men.” They like to hunt and fish and watch sports, and they proudly work blue-collar jobs. What are the positive aspects of this kind of traditional masculinity? What are the limitations? And how does Mikey feel about the example they set?
7. What is the place of women in *Wingshooters*? Think especially of Helen, Mikey’s grandmother. Does Mikey fit the expectations for girls in town? Does Betty Garrett fit the conventional roles? Why or why not?
8. Why is Mikey so drawn to the Garretts? Why does she go to the satellite clinic to visit Mrs. Garrett? Why do the Garretts make a point of being kind to Mikey?
9. Darius Gordon and Jim Riesling seem to be the only two people in town who don’t approve of how the Garretts are being treated. What is it about these men that allows them to see things differently?
10. Michelle’s dog, Brett, is one of the main characters. What is the significance of his role in the early parts of the book—and of his part in the novel’s climactic scenes?
11. Kevin Watson is harboring a terrible family secret. Have you been privy to such secrets—either in your own family, or in someone else’s? What have you done about them? How do you feel about how you handled the situation?

12. *Wingshooters* is told from the point of view of an adult Michelle, looking back on events that occurred when she was nine years old. What is the effect of this kind of narration? How would the story be different if it were truly told from the point of view of a nine-year-old child?
13. How might Earl Watson's childhood have influenced his opinions and choices as a grown man? What are the implications of his story?
14. The Garretts act on principle, even after it becomes clear that doing so is putting them in danger. Why do they do this? Do you agree with their decisions? Have you ever stood up for something on principle, even if you knew that the consequences might be negative for you?
15. In several instances, Canada Geese appear in the story. What is their significance to Mikey, and to the story? How do they relate thematically to Mikey's situation?
16. Revoyr begins the book with two very different epigraphs. How do the epigraphs relate to the novel and its themes?
17. Late in the novel, Michelle states that "blood does not run thicker than color." What does she mean by this? Do you agree? Do the events of the novel support this belief, or contradict it?
18. *Wingshooters* includes many references to faith, sin, and redemption. How do these themes play out in the story? Who is in need of redemption? And can redemption always be achieved?
19. Do Mikey's feelings toward her grandfather change through the course of the story? Why so—or why not? How does Michelle feel about her grandfather years later, when she's an adult? Have you ever had to deal with someone you love behaving in a way you don't expect or agree with?
20. *Wingshooters* is set in a small Midwestern town almost 40 years ago. Could something like the events of this story happen today?
21. Can you think of an instance, either in your own life or more generally, when someone reacted badly to a person or group because they were different? What happened? And what do you think of the situation now?
22. In *Wingshooters*, small-town norms and sensibilities seem at odds with changes in the larger world. Do the characters, settings, or dynamics of the novel have any parallels in present-day America?