

By the Sweet Gum
Book Club Questions

1. What was unique about the setting of this book? Do you think it enhanced the story?
2. Do you know anyone who grew up in a mill village? What was life like there?
3. Genessee was a middle child. How did this affect her?
4. The girls wear dresses made from flour or feed sacks. Did you know that the flour and feed companies added the prints just for that reason? How do you think that affected sales and competition between companies?
5. Genessee makes a calendula oil slave for Billy's foot. Have you ever made or used herbal remedies? How did they work?
6. Frank Taylor, Genessee's daddy, works hard to provide for his family. He's a pastor, manages the hotel and the general store. The women do the hotel daily work. During the Great Depression, this was the norm, if you could even find a job. How do you think this situation affected their family life? What about their lobbying efforts?
7. Fear of those in power can paralyze people. How did Genessee and her sisters overcome that fear?