

Of Metal and Earth Book Club Discussion Guide

Spoiler Alert!

This document contains questions that could spoil the plot! For the best experience, read the book before browsing the questions.

1. The setting has a strong influence on the story, as the Jeep moves from town to town. How did the landscape contribute to the creation and shaping of the story? If the setting were changed, how would the car and characters have been altered?
2. Treatment for the type of PTSD James experienced was not prevalent at that time and, as a veteran, his experiences would have also been shaped by treatment of his fellow soldiers upon their return home from war. How do you think his experiences changed him? What traces of PTSD stayed with him over the years?
3. Family relationships are a strong theme in the book, with each of the seven owners dealing with their own types of family baggage. Compare and contrast a few. Are there similarities in William's relationships with his parents that can be seen between Vince and Peter? In what ways did any of these characters become like their parents?
4. The Jeep met several low points during the story. What do you feel was its lowest? When was it most at risk? When was it at its peak?
5. Each character's flaws can often be seen represented in the world around them, through symbolism. For example, when William was scattered and had no focus, his life revolved around sorting thousands of envelopes in a mailroom. When he found his focus, it was through a single piece of mail. What other character flaws were illustrated in the setting?
6. Which character did you relate to most and what about them resonated with you? If you could insert yourself into the book, alongside any of the Jeep's owners, which would you choose and why?
7. How do you picture James' life unfolding after he sells the Jeep to William?

8. What do you see for the future between William and Rebecca? What kind of life do they go on to live in D.C.?
9. The impact of the Jeep on Ben and Mark is clear. In what ways do you think Olivia was changed by her experiences with the Jeep?
10. How does Pauline's relationship with religion change because of her acceptance of her son and how was her path altered by the Jeep?
11. Walter leaves the Jeep to his son and grandson as an unfinished project. In what way does the Jeep represent the relationships between Walter, Jack, and Alex?
12. In the barn one night, Jack expresses regret about his past relationship with his father. In what way does the Jeep influence the regrets Jack expressed?
13. Alex is the only character in the book who is not native to the area, yet he plays one of the biggest roles in the Jeep's story. In what ways do his past as a city dweller and his "outsider" status impact the story and the fate of the Jeep?
14. James and Kate both bought the same Jeep, hoping it would heal a wound. In what ways are their stories parallel?



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If your book club enjoyed this book, I would love to hear about it! Please send an email to jennifer@jennifermlanewrites.com and share your experience!