

# READING GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

## MORGAN'S PASTURE

by Wallace J. Swenson

June 2010

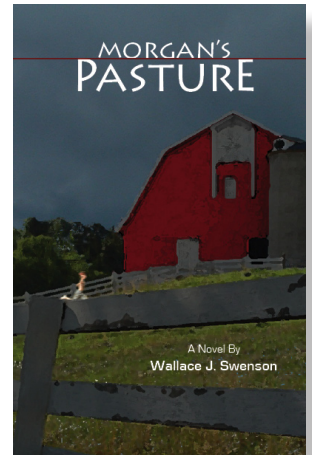
Trade paperback \$11.95

ISBN 978-0-9801419-9-3

Three Muses Press

threemusespress.com

503.232.0103



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Describe the relationships between Will and Charlie, Charlie and Trailer, and Will and Trailer. Discuss how each evolved that short summer.
2. Why was Will the leader? How does Will keep the other two in check? What are some of the methods he uses to lead the other boys?
3. Who affected Will more, his mother or his father? Did he respect one more than the other? Why?
4. Discuss Trailer's relationship with his mother. Did she love him? What drove her to respond to him the way she did? How did their relationship differ from that of Will and Will's mother?
5. What purpose did the character Chub serve in the story? And Shine? Why do Shine and Chub live together despite their very different personalities?
6. What character most affected you? How so?
7. Do you find it unusual that Will would confide to a stranger what he would not to his parents?
8. What do you think about the way the protagonists spend their summer? Is it similar to how you spend your summer vacation? What sense do you get of the young men's lives at that time?
9. Are the relationships depicted in this book true to life? Are they common among boys this age?
10. To your mind, how should the boys have handled Patrolman Harken? Was there anything redeeming about Harken?
11. Was Chief Carlin a fair man, or a self-serving one? Did he know what a miscreant his deputy was?
12. What does Trailer have to prove? To whom? Why was Trailer unable to see the love that was all around him?
13. Why do all the adults seem to stand up for Trailer at the shooting range? What is significant about this event for Trailer? For Will and Charlie?

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14. What events caused Will's shift in attitude? What did he begin to do or not do when it occurred? How did the people around Will react to his attitude change?
15. What do you think motivated Trailer to commit his final actions? Do you see it coming from early on or are you surprised when it occurs?
16. What might have been the repercussions of this event (see #14) for the rest of the town? What were the repercussions for Will as he grew older?
17. Some of the themes of *Morgan's Pasture* include: friendship, growing up, trust, and responsibility. What are some of the other themes in this book? Are these themes only relevant to young men, or are they universal in scope?

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Employed from the age of twelve, **Wallace J. Swenson** swept floors and cleaned pool hall spittoons during his rural Idaho boyhood, and was a meteorologist and computer systems specialist during his twenty years in the U.S. Air Force. He supervised a 911 center for a few years and then designed, built, and managed an Emergency Operations Center at a nuclear testing facility for another half-dozen years. An award-winning poet, novelist, and short-story writer, he lives and works where he grew up. *Morgan's Pasture* is Swenson's first published novel.

*Wallace J. Swenson.*  
*Photo credit: Max Swenson.*