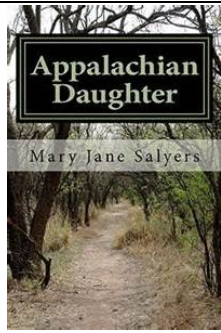




# Discussion Guide



## About the Book

Book Title: Appalachian Daughter

Author: Mary Jane Salyers

Published: CreateSpace, 2014

Author Website: <https://mjsalyers.wordpress.com>

## Questions for Discussion

1. What were your general impressions of this book?
  2. This book revolves around an Appalachian community in the 1940s. What is your experience with Appalachia? Do you have family from the area or have you ever visited? What do you know about Appalachia, then and now?
  3. This is a coming of age story of Maggie Martin. What did you think of her character? Could you identify with her experiences in any ways? Explain
  4. Maggie's mother, Cora Mae, seemed to be rather difficult for Maggie. What was her mother's perspective and how did she become that way?
  5. In what ways did the author incorporate the language and euphemisms of Appalachia into this book? Look at the vocabulary page she offers on her web page at: <https://mjsalyers.wordpress.com/maggiesworld/context/annotated-vocabulary-list/>
  6. What were the different views of education among the characters in this book? Why do you think that education was favored by some and not others? Have you experienced these different views in your life? Explain.
  7. How was the subject of people of different races handled in this book? Is that similar or different to what you've experienced in your family?
  8. Read over the MAMs comments on the book. Which of them do you most agree with and why?
  9. In what ways, if any, will this book change your life or perspective?
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**NANCY:** Well, I watched this book unfold over the years, while in a writing group with the author, Mary Jane, so it's very special to me. She's a great writer and she writes about the milieu of her own childhood, so she knows what she's talking about. Reading this book introduced me to a different world, one I only know a little about. I enjoy the humor and the many characters, with very real, down home interactions. It's so exciting that although she self-published the book, the sales have really taken off and it was recently recorded for an audio book. So proud of Mary Jane!



**SALLIE:** I feel for the children growing up in this community. When I was a teacher, most of the families valued education and I didn't have many that were fighting me. Some that were poor, like the children in this story, and we tried to help them out as much as we could. I think Maggie's story is a story of triumph, but I doubt most of the girls were quite as successful.



**ABIGAIL:** Appalachia is one of those places where the American dream went largely unrealized. The life of the coal miner was extremely harsh. The extreme poverty and backwoods nature of their lives made it hard for the children to grow up and transcend their environment. Now, as the days of coal mining have ended, in those areas without other industry, the poverty is worse. One of our American secrets, I think. I'm glad she wrote the story.



**MOLLY:** Well, of course I was interested in the family member that went up to Detroit and married a Black woman. Not only did he desert his family, but also took up with someone of a different race. Yet the who issue was somewhat hush-hush. They kept it quiet, not as negative as I would expect. Of course, looking at it from Maggie's perspective, you see her trying to figure it all out, finding it puzzling. To me, I liked the gentle way this was handled in the book.



**PRISCILLA:** Well, I felt a little like I was reading about my family. My grandmother grew up in a place like this, but my daddy went north and got a job in a factory, so he left Appalachia. He used to talk about this when I was a little girl, and when we went down to visit, we usually stayed in a motel, because there was no room for us to sleep. I don't remember it very well. My father always told me that's why I needed to study hard so I wouldn't end up poor like my cousins. I guess he didn't have their view on education.



**JANE:** I like Maggie. She's my hero. A strong girl, but she showed gut and determination. She stood up for herself as much as she could, and in the end it looks like she escaped. It's a story of so many young people, leaving their parents behind. I know it's hard for the parents, but I just kept saying, "You go, girl!" as I read it.



**KATHARINE:** Great period piece. I would recommend it especially for high school students studying American history, education majors and even college history students. It makes the life of the Appalachian family come alive as you get to peek in the doors and bedrooms of these proud people. A good contribution to the social history of Appalachia.