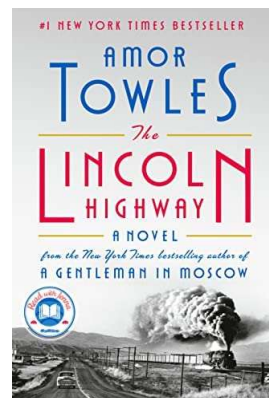




Discussion Questions

The Lincoln Highway

Amor Towles



1. How do you think Emmett, Duchess, Woolly, and Sally's various upbringings—particularly their relationships to their parents—have shaped them? How have their parents' choices influenced their own desires and ambitions?
 2. Early in the novel, Emmett meets Sister Agnes, a nun who describes the faith of children, who look upon a miracle "with awe and wonder, yes, but without disbelief." How would you describe Billy's personality? While he is the youngest and least experienced character in the novel, one could argue that he has the greatest influence on other characters. What is it about Billy that makes this so?
 3. The novel takes place in the mid-1950s—a period of peace, prosperity, and upward mobility in the US; a period of television, the advents of rock & roll, the modern civil rights movement, and the "sexual revolution". How does the era shape the journeys of the characters, if at all? What aspects of their journeys are unique to their times, and what aspects were shared by you when you were on the verge of adulthood?
 4. Discuss the broader themes in the novel of moral accounting: of debt and recompense, transgression and atonement, sin and redemption.
 5. The City of New York is a thousand cities rolled into one. How does New York differ in the eyes of Emmett, Duchess, Woolly, and Billy?
 6. What about this novel strikes you as particularly American? What does self-reliance mean to Emmett, to Duchess, and to Sally?
 7. How would you describe each main character's transformation over the course of the novel? Which character do you think evolves most significantly? Which characters, in your opinion, found what they were looking for? Do you have a favorite character, and why?
 8. The Lincoln Highway takes place over just ten days. How does the span of time affect the narrative and your experience of it? What are the benefits and limitations that come with reading a novel spanning days rather than years?
 9. What virtue do you think each of the main characters possesses in excess?
 10. Given inflation, \$50,000 in 1954 would be the equivalent of about \$500,000 today. What would you do if you were suddenly given half a million dollars?
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