

Examining *Wabash 3* (pp. 91-135)

1. Deborah has a “crazy thought that she could change [her aunts], make them act only on their kindness” on page 92. However, not long into her visit with the sisters, she again retreats to her grandmother’s house (on page 97). Why does she continue to seek out this woman? Take into consideration the following quote about the letters to the rats: “Writing to rats. Deborah realizes she was taking this seriously; she even felt a tweak of envy over her grandmother’s project.”
2. The differences between the Catholic and Protestant religions play a very big part in this portion of the book. When Deborah visits Effie, she is confronted by a few icons she has never seen before. Two stand out above the others: a statue of Mary (p. 107) and an occupied crucifix (p. 105). Review the passages in which Deborah contemplates these figures and explain the significance in terms of the overall book thus far.
3. Reread Grandma Birney’s final letter on page 115. How does the tone and content of the letter mirror Deborah’s own feelings about her family? What could the fact that Birney is found dead shortly after Deborah finds this letter foreshadow about her own future?
4. On page 123, Deborah finds herself staring at Effie as she weeps for her dead mother and feels that she is “a spectator again, just as she was in her mother’s parlor.” She then has a rather frightening epiphany. What is it and why is she so terrified by this thought? How is Effie’s reaction to Deborah’s comforting her rather strange?
5. Reread the part beginning on page 127 where Nick forces his son into a fight. Why do you think this scene is inserted into the novel at this point? What is the purpose of the fight? Examine and explain Jeremy’s many reactions to witnessing this.
6. Beginning on page 129, we see the reactions Deborah and Jeremy have to the death of Grandma Birney. Reread this section (p. 129-130) and compare the differing reactions, motivations, etc., that these protagonists have to the grandmother’s death.
7. On page 131, Deborah “felt inarticulate before God...How could she say what she wanted?...Why was she trying so hard to force these women together? Why not let them be?” Reexamine this brief portion of the novel and answer these questions; answer the challenge of Miriam to her daughter.