



BREAKING WILD

- 1** The story is narrated by two female characters, Amy Raye and Pru. Discuss these two women. How do they compare and differ? Do you identify with one more than the other?
- 2** More specifically, compare Amy Raye and Pru as mothers. In what ways do you think they succeed and fail as parents? Do they evolve in their roles as mothers throughout the novel?
- 3** Why is Amy Raye so drawn to the wild horses? What do they represent for her?
- 4** In a conversation with her husband, Amy Raye said, “Everyone wants love to be this great, life-altering experience, their feelings to be so special, so unique, so dramatic, so beyond anything anyone else has. Is that even possible?” What do you think? Does this type of love exist? Have you experienced it yourself?
- 5** How does Amy Raye use sex—is it an addiction, a source of comfort, a feeling of power, a habit, an escape? Who’s to blame, if anyone, for her wild ways?
- 6** Amy Raye states, “She knew how Farrell loved her, did not want to lose her, knew how important it was for him to hold the family together, and that was the power she had over him.” Were you sympathetic toward Farrell? If you were Farrell, would you have stuck with Amy Raye after all she put him through? Did your feelings change throughout the novel?
- 7** Dogs in *Breaking Wild* are invaluable companions for several of the characters. Discuss the relationship of each character and her dog. How do their pets help them through life?
- 8** “She wanted to believe that he, like Saddle, could love her unconditionally.” Is there any such thing as unconditional love between people? Could you love someone no matter what hurt he or she may cause you?
- 9** Pru states: “My goal at this point was to find some evidence that Amy Raye had indeed taken down an elk, that perhaps there had been something pure about her disappearance?” Why does Pru feel such a strong need to redeem Amy Raye? What draws her to the woman? What might they have in common?
- 10** Why is it so critical for a search team to find a body or discover the truth, even when a cause seems lost? Is it worth the energy and prolonged emotions?
- 11** Discuss the morality of Amy Raye and her actions. Do you feel sympathetic toward her? Was her sexual deviancy at all to blame for her disappearance?
- 12** Several times throughout the novel, Amy Raye calls upon God and prays. What role does religion play in Amy Raye’s life? Is she religious or does prayer serve a different purpose for her?
- 13** When the novel ends, the relationship between Colm and Pru is left ambiguous. Where do you think, or hope, it is headed?
- 14** How does being alone in the wilderness change Amy Raye? What revelations, if any, does she have? Did you think she would survive as long as she did, and were you surprised by her fate at the end of the book?