Fried Green Tomatoes ... Discussion Questions – Chunk #5 (pp. 321-394/end

RAILROAD BILL - In this section, the reader learns the true identity of Railroad Bill.
- Compare and contrast the effects Railroad Bill had on Whistle Stop with the effects he had on Troutsville. What is the same about these effects? What is different?
- Were you surprised to learn that Idgie was Railroad Bill? Were you surprised to learn that Grady would help Railroad Bill? Why or why not?
- How was Idgie able to keep her true identity a secret for as long as she was? What was the response in the Whistle Stop community when the truth about Railroad Bill came out? Does this response surprise you? Why or why not?
- Why was Railroad Bill an important character within the African-American community in the novel? How did Railroad Bill get a hold of the food he handed out to the community? How was the KKK inadvertently involved in Railroad Bill’s success?

THE TRIAL - In this section, the reader learns more about Idgie’s murder trial and the way her friends helped her. -- Create a list of characters that came out to speak for Idgie’s defense. Is there anyone on this list that surprises you? Why or why not?
- Do you think Idgie would have been found guilty of the murder if another judge, aside from Curtis Smoote, had presided over the case? Why or why not? Do you think justice was served to Frank Bennett? Why or why not?
- Why is it surprising to hear that the local Reverend came out and testified on Idgie’s behalf? How did this defense change Idgie’s relationship with the church? Morally, do you think the Reverend should have testified? Why or why not?

THE MURDER - In this section, the truth about Frank’s murder comes to light.
- Create a time line of events leading up to Frank’s murder. Based on this time line of events, should the reader have been able to foresee the murder? Why or why not?
- Compare and contrast Big George’s reaction to Frank’s murder with Artis’ reaction to Frank’s murder. What is the same about their reactions? What is different? Is there anything unexpected / surprising in this comparison?
- Do you think Sipsey would have been able to beat Frank’s lawyers had the murder case ever gone to trial? What reasons does Sipsey have to fear the justice system in Whistle Stop?
- Which characters were involved in the murder and disposal of Frank Bennett? Does this list surprise you? Why or why not? Why do you think Artis acted so violently toward Frank’s body even after the murder was complete? Why was Frank’s head eventually separated from the rest of his body after the murder?
- How was Frank’s body disposed of after the murder? As a reader, what is your reaction to how Frank’s body was disposed of? Is there justice in this treatment? Why or why not?

Minor Character – Artis Peavey
- Consider all of the details we now know about Artis Peavey. Would you consider him a sympathetic character? Why or why not?
- Do you think Artis blames himself for Frank Bennett’s murder? How did Frank’s murder affect Artis’ psychology?
- Where is Artis living at the end of his life? Does this living situation surprise you? Why or why not? Who do you think the woman is taking care of Artis? How does Artis feel about his father at the end of the novel? Does this surprise you? Why or why not?
- At the end of the novel, Artis is living solely in old memories, no longer the present. What memories does Artis replay in his mind? What insight do these memories give the reader into his character?

ENDINGS - In this section, Flagg neatly ties up the stories of the characters that are still alive at the end of the final chapter.
- Create a list of characters that were important to the novel. Which of these characters does Flagg give an ending to? Which does she leave out?
- Compare and contrast the ending Flagg gives to Evelyn with the ending she gives to Idgie. What is the same about their endings? What is different? Is there anything unexpected or surprising in this comparison?