Book Club Discussion questions for *The Girl from the Red Rose Motel*

1. When Sterling meets Hazel during their day of in-school suspension, his immediate response is physical attraction. However, once he gets to know Hazel, Sterling’s interest extends far beyond the superficial qualities of appearance. Discuss reasons Sterling is drawn to Hazel.
2. Angela Wilmore is blindsided when a student’s parents, Donovan and Genny Powell, attempt to censor the literature she teaches in her AP English class. Teachers in the real world of public school education often face such challenges. Angela refuses to submit to parental oversight of her curriculum. How do you feel about her response?
3. Beyond the fact that Courtney is Sterling’s ex-girlfriend, what motivates Courtney and her friends Madison and Jill to sabotage Hazel by planting a knife in her handbag during lunch period in the student dining room at Ramsey High School?
4. Each of the main characters in *The Girl from the Red Rose Motel* displays extraordinary acts of courage. What are Angela’s, Sterling’s, and Hazel’s most courageous acts and why are they important?
5. How do the contrasting settings of Hazel’s home at the rundown Red Rose Motel and Sterling’s formal Georgian home in Stockton Estates, symbolize each character’s desire?
6. By the end of the novel, Hazel proves she has matured from an insecure, unsure young woman into a person with a strong sense of self. What influences and circumstances foster her growth and how?
7. When he enters Angela Wilmore’s AP English class, Sterling is an arrogant young man with the brashness to challenge his teacher inappropriately. How does Angela’s influence help bring Sterling to a different perspective?
8. How are Hazel’s and Sterling’s attitudes toward themselves affected by their different socioeconomic status?
9. On the surface, Hazel’s decision at the end might appear to be a selfish act, but in what ways is her resolve far more selfless than selfish?
10. In what ways do Hazel’s and Angela’s lives parallel each other?
11. In the Southeast, evictions are more common than anywhere else in the nation, says [an analysis published](https://www.pnas.org/doi/10.1073/pnas.2116169119) in 2022 in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. According to [data from the Eviction Lab](https://evictionlab.org/map/?m=modeled&c=p&b=efr&s=all&r=states&y=2018&z=3.96&lat=38.34&lon=-92.77&lang=en&l=13_-83.22_32.68)at Princeton University in 2022, there are 23 evictions for every 100 renter households in South Carolina. Many of these evictions force people to live in substandard motels, as is the case with Hazel’s South Carolina family in *The Girl from the Red Rose Motel.* From descriptions of the rundown Red Rose Motel in the novel, examine the danger, both physically and psychologically, for Hazel’s family living in the motel.
12. If you could have a conversation with one of the characters in the novel, who would it be and why?