

# BROKEN COUNTRY

## CLARE LESLIE HALL

*This reading group guide for **Broken Country** contains questions that are intended to help you find new and interesting angles and topics for your discussion. We hope that these ideas will enrich your conversation and increase your enjoyment of the book.*

1. How does Gabriel's return challenge Beth's perception of her own life choices? Did you find Beth's internal struggle between her past self and the woman she has become relatable?
2. If you were Beth, would you have chosen Frank or Gabriel?
3. Discuss the small-town setting of *Broken Country*: How did the tight-knit atmosphere of the village contribute to the unfolding drama? Do you think the events of the novel would have played out differently if it weren't set in a rural farming village?
4. Did you enjoy the way Clare Leslie Hall teased out the details of the murder trial? Who did you initially suspect was on trial? Did it play out the way you thought it would?
5. Before Beth and Gabriel consummate their affair, do you think Beth is being fair to Frank by keeping the extent of her emotional connection to Gabriel a secret? Is it possible for someone to fully move on from a past relationship if they haven't completely healed from it?
6. How did Beth and Frank's marriage seem to you at the start of the novel? Once you read on, did your perception of their marriage change?
7. Discuss the role that grief and loss play in the novel. How do different characters respond to loss? How does the loss of Bobby affect Beth and Frank's marriage? What role does grief play in shaping Beth's relationship with Gabriel?
8. The novel is full of hidden secrets and repressed emotions, especially in the way people in the village react to Gabriel's return. What role do these secrets play in the novel? How do they affect Beth's relationships and her sense of self?
9. Discuss Beth's journey of coming to terms with her son's death. How does the arrival of Leo and Gabriel affect her ability to cope with that loss?
10. Do the rural setting and the natural world have symbolic significance for the characters and the plot? How might the land and country itself mirror the emotional conflicts in the story?
11. What do you think Clare Leslie Hall is trying to say about the power of first love in *Broken Country*? Does it always leave a lasting impact? Did you feel that Beth's past love with Gabriel was a source of strength or pain for her? How does this influence the way she views herself and her current life?
12. Throughout the novel, Beth is confronted with the woman she once was versus the woman she has become. What do you think the author is saying about identity, particularly how it is shaped by love, grief, and time?
13. The novel ends with some explosive consequences and twists. Were you surprised by the revelations at the end? Did you see any of them coming? If so, when?

