

A  
CUP  
*of*  
DUST

*A Novel of the Dust Bowl*

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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Before reading *A Cup of Dust*, what did you know about the Dust Bowl? The Great Depression?
2. The 1930s were a time of rich storytelling. Daddy and Millard told tales that were sometimes believable and sometimes fantastical. What are some stories shared by your family that are close to mythological? What are some stories that are more plausible?
3. A popular teaching during the Dust Bowl was that the disaster was caused by the sin of the people. Many preachers taught that it was the punishment of God, much like Pastor Ezra Anderson did. What is your reaction to such theology? How does Pastor's teaching contrast with the teachings of Meemaw?
4. How does the theme of fairy tales run through *A Cup of Dust*? Why does Pearl rely less and less on them as the story unfolds?
5. The author used historically accurate language for the description of African American and Native American people. How did those words sit with you? Do you believe that we've made progress in relations between people groups?
6. One tagline for this novel is, "Where you come from isn't who you are." What does that mean when reflecting on Pearl's story? What does it mean for you?

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7. In the cellar, Eddie told Pearl “pity ain’t love.” What do you think about that within the context of the story? How about in your life?
8. What did you think of the scene in which Daddy comes into the cellar? Did it end the way you expected? What did it tell you about Daddy’s character?
9. Palm Sunday in 1935 started as a beautiful, sunny day. That’s where *A Cup of Dust* ends. What do you think is next for the Spence family?