



# Jodi Picoult

## Book club discussion questions

### Salem Falls

1. This book is billed as a Y2K update of *The Crucible*. In what ways is there a witch hunt in the town of Salem Falls? What sparks the conflagration, and what feeds the fire?
2. Is it possible to distance oneself from one's past? Which characters in the book support this claim? Which refute it?
3. What is the significance of the title of the book?
4. Should the citizens of a town have the right to decide who lives there?
5. Picoult tells the story of Jack's life backward, to the moment of his birth. How do these flashbacks affect the present-day story, and why did she choose to do this?
6. Is it possible, in your opinion, to reinvent yourself?
7. Should a verbal accusation of rape be enough to get the judicial wheels turning? Explain, using the examples of both Catherine Marsh and Addie Peabody.

8. What is the significance of having Jack be a trivia expert?
9. Gillian says on page 64, "Think how powerful you felt tonight, healing someone. And then imagine how powerful you'd feel if you could ruin someone's life." Do you agree? Are the most powerful people the ones who have the ability to influence others' fate? Explain, using the examples of Amos, Gillian, Jack and Addie.
10. To what extent is this book about spirituality and religion, and its abuse?
11. Is it witchcraft that brings about Jack's downfall? Or something else?
12. In what ways does Jack's relationship with Addie save him? In what way does it lead to his destruction?
13. Compare the father/daughter relationships of Addie and Roy, Gillian and Amos, Charlie and Meg, Matt Houlihan and Molly, and Catherine and Reverend Marsh. How does the bond formed between parent and child influence each of their actions?
14. What does Jordan McAfee learn from his client?
15. Which character most deserves pity in this book? Why?