



## Discussion Questions: ***Prodigal Summer*** by Barbara Kingsolver

1. Deanna is the self-appointed protector of coyotes and all predators. Is she disturbing nature's own ways of dealing with upsets? What about Garnett and his quest for a blight-free chestnut tree—is this “good” for nature?
2. How does the relationship between Deanna and Eddie Bondo change them both? Should Deanna have told Eddie about the pregnancy? Do you think he already knew and that was one of the reasons he left when he did? Discuss the imagery of the black snake that lives in Deanna's house. How does the snake shadow the relationship between Deanna and Eddie? When does the snake leave?
3. When Nannie and Garnett hug, a huge barrier between them drops. What has changed in the relationship? How much does Garnett's longing for love and human contact account for his shifting perception of Nannie? The world around him? What else accounts for his changed attitude? Does Nannie change as well? What do you think is the future of their relationship?
4. The three major story lines are named “Predators,” “Moth Love,” and “Old Chestnuts.” Why do you think Deanna's chapters are named “Predators?” Does her love of predators make her the “natural” lover of Eddie Bondo?

How does Luisa's life mirror the life cycle of her beloved moths? How does her love of insects lead to her emergence from her cocoon of grief?

How do Garnett and Nannie remind you of “old chestnuts?” Are they extinct? Are they the few trees left after a blight?

How does Kingsolver bring all of these characters and elements together? How do these relationships relate to the theme of the book?

5. Why did Kingsolver name her book Prodigal Summer? Consider the meaning of the word prodigal.