

Westchester Public Library Virtual Book Discussion Group

Apr. 16, 2020 @3:00 PM on Zoom

Dandelion Wine by Ray Bradbury

1. What does it mean to be alive? What does it mean to Douglas? To you, personally? Do you remember when you first became aware, or conscious, that you were alive?
2. *Dandelion Wine* is peopled with characters of various ages, from boyhood through old age. How does life, and all of its meanings and imperatives, differ from age to age in the book? How about in your own experiences: how has your understanding of life changed from the time you were a young child up to whatever age you are now?
3. If one feels life intensely, does one also fear death intensely as Douglas does? How about you: if you fall in love with life, is it possible to come to an acceptance of your own death? How does Colonel Freeleigh approach his death? Great-grandma Spaulding tells Douglas that "no person ever died that had a family." What does she mean?
4. By the book's end, how does Douglas gain acceptance of both life and death? What lessons does he learn? What lessons might you have taken away from this book?
5. Talk about the title of Bradbury's book. What is the significance of dandelion wine...and of dandelions themselves? Consider that the dandelion is a lowly weed, that it dies but returns to life each spring, and that it disperses its seeds over wide distances.
6. What role does magic play in this work? What about in real life: Do you believe that the ordinary, mundane part of life holds a kind of magic? What comprises "magic" in life for Douglas, the people of Greenville...and for you?
7. Talk about the machines in the story. How do they function symbolically? Consider the Green Machine, the Happiness Machine, the trolley, and the lawn mower. Do machines enhance life by adding to its magic? Or do machines detract from life?
8. Why is memory so prominent in this work? Can the past exist without access to memory?
9. The ravine is an important setting in the book. What does it mean to the boys? What does it mean to the community? Think about the ravine as wonder, wildness, freedom, the unknown, danger...or all of those things. Was there such a place when you were growing up?
10. What parts of the book do you find humorous? Which parts do you find akin to your own childhood?
11. Does *Dandelion Wine* portray an idealized childhood? Or a realistic one?

Questions from <https://www.litlovers.com/reading-guides/fiction/9937-dandelion-wine-bradbury?start=3>