

JUST LIFE READER'S GUIDE

1. Each of the major characters in *Just Life* is searching for "sanctuary" in their own way and it is clear that "sanctuary" means something different to each one. What are the different types of "sanctuary" in the book? What does "sanctuary" mean to you? Is "sanctuary" merely escape from someone or something or is it something else entirely?
2. Gabriel is challenged to choose between giving one dog a thousand days of love or a thousand dogs one day of love. If you had to make that choice, what would you decide and why?
3. Beth tells Sam that we are all only the product of what someone else did to us or didn't do for us. Do you believe that is true for the characters in the book? Do you think that statement is true generally?
4. Many people believe that it is appropriate -- indeed, required -- to kill as many nonhuman animals as necessary to try to save one human life. Do you agree? How certain do you believe we need to be that a human will be saved before we take the life of one, ten, ten thousand or a million non-human animals? Does your view change if those animals are companion cats or dogs and, if so, why does that change matter to you?
5. Several characters must decide when it is appropriate to turn away from people they care about because those relationships have become destructive. How do you know when it is the right time to say goodbye? When is it right to stop trying to make things "better"?
6. Would you ever break the law to do what you know is right? Even if your decision might adversely impact others?
7. How do Andy and Gabriel struggle with the power of memory and how does it impact their lives? Are there other characters who experience the same struggle? Have you?

8. What is the impact of fear in ***Just Life***? Which character is the most fearful? Which character shows the most bravery? Which character is the most "just"?

9. Shame is a powerful force. How has shame shaped the characters? Has shame ever influenced any of your decisions?

10. To what extent should our decisions be influenced by the impact of those decisions on others? When, if ever, are we morally or ethically obligated to put another's needs before our own? Can the process by which a decision is reached be more important than its factual correctness?