



Pushing the Limits: Strategy Suggested Questions and Readings

Pushing the Limits: Strategy Discussion Questions

- What surprised you about this story?
- What elements of Flor's story remind you of things happening here in our community?
- Flor and the promotoras noticed that heat is a major issues for community members and recognize that heat issues are only likely to get worse with climate change.
 - How do heat issues affect our own community?
 - What lessons could we take from the promotoras and apply here in our community?
- Flor and the promotoras developed a partnership with the City of Tucson to provide rainwater harvesting infrastructure to residents who can't afford it.
 - How will this partnership benefit the City of Tucson?
 - How would you envision a similar partnership in our community?
- Drought-resistant trees are needed to help buffer the heat island effect in Tucson. However, as Flor discovered, even species that are well-adapted to Tucson's historic climate are facing strain.
 - Choose a hypothetical solution that could help mitigate heat issues in our community.
 - How can we anticipate and plan for some of the potential issues we could encounter as we implement that solution?
- What do you want to learn more about?

Recommended Books and Discussion Questions

Forty Signs of Rain by Kim Stanley Robinson (fiction)

"It's an increasingly steamy summer in the nation's capital as Senate environmental staffer Charlie Quibler cares for his young son and deals with the frustrating politics of global warming... While Charlie struggles to play politics, his wife, Anna, takes a more rational approach to the looming crisis in her work at the National Science Foundation. There a proposal has come in for a revolutionary process that could solve the problem of global warming—if it can be recognized in time. But when a race to control the budding technology begins, the stakes only get higher" (*"Amazon Books."* Accessed Nov. 15, 2016. <https://www.amazon.com/Forty-Signs-Rain-Stanley-Robinson/dp/0553585800>.)

- As readers, why do you think we're drawn to stories about the end of the world?
- Is any part of the book relevant to what is going on in Washington DC today?
- What first comes to mind when you hear the term "climate change"?





- Why does Robinson spend so much time introducing the characters?
- This is a story of fiction, but with time, do you think it might become non-fiction?
- Does this tale frighten you at all?
- Do you believe that climate change exists?
- How do you think our nation and the rest of the world should go about handling climate change?
- We see politics play a role in this story, what impact could politicians have on climate change?
- Should science play a part in politics?
- Do you find yourself caring more about our planet after reading this story?
- Did you find the plot believable?
- Did you enjoy reading about all of the science in this book?
- How do you feel about the way the book ends?
- What does the ending leave you wondering about?

***The Water Knife* by Paolo Bacigalupi (fiction)**

“In a future hammered by climate change and drought, mountain snows have turned to rain, and rain evaporates before it hits the ground. In a fragmenting United States, the cities of Phoenix and Las Vegas skirmish for a dwindling share of the Colorado River. But it is the Las Vegas water knives - assassins, terrorists and spies - who are legendary for protecting Las Vegas' water supplies, and for ensuring Phoenix's ruin. When rumours of a game-changing water source surface, Las Vegas dispatches elite water knife Angel Velasquez to Phoenix to investigate. There, he discovers hardened journalist Lucy Monroe, who holds the secret to the water source Angel seeks. But Angel isn't the only one hunting for water, Lucy is no pushover, and the death of a despised water knife is a small price to pay in return for the life-giving flow of a river.” (*Fantastic Fiction.* Accessed Nov 15, 2016. <https://www.fantasticfiction.com/b/paolo-bacigalupi/water-knife.htm>.)

- Throughout the novel, several of the characters refer to the past, citing some variation of “It wasn’t always like this.” Does there seem to be any benefit to reflecting on the past or does looking back hinder the characters in some way?
- In chapter 16, Angel tells Lucy about a specific ritual of the tamarisk hunters. Why do you think that he chooses to share this story with Lucy? Why do the hunters share water when they meet each other at the Colorado? How does this ritual correspond to the relationship between the characters in *The Water Knife*? What do you think this reveals about the storyteller, Angel? Does the story seem to elicit the response that Angel was hoping for from Lucy?
- In chapter 7, Angel indicates that he “had always liked the desert for its lack of illusions”. What do you think he means by this? Evaluate the theme of truth in the novel. Are the characters able to see the truth of what is going on around them and the truth about themselves, or are they in denial? What allows them to see the truth, or otherwise prevents them from being able to see it?
- Examine the treatment of the theme of allegiance within the story. How does allegiance seem to be defined within this novel? To what do the characters show allegiance? Do the characters remain steadfast in their allegiance or do their allegiances shift throughout? If they shift, what seems to motivate these changes?



- In chapter 28, we learn that Angel blends in with the group of people he is among. What is it that allows him to blend in? What does he have in common with all of the others in the group? What major theme or themes does this seem to reveal or support?
- Toomie says, “We’re all each other’s people”. What does he mean by this? Do the other characters seem to share this notion? Toomie also says that an Indian man once told him that he believed that the people of India could survive an apocalypse while Americans could not. Why does the Indian man believe this? Do you agree? Does the novel seem to confirm or refute that idea? Are there any examples of solidarity in the book? What does Angel seem to think about cooperation and survival?

Additional Suggested Readings

Arctic Drift by Clive Cussler (fiction)

“A potential breakthrough discovery to reverse global warming . . . a series of unexplained sudden deaths in British Columbia . . . a rash of international incidents between the United States and one of its closest allies that threatens to erupt into an actual shooting war . . . NUMA director Dirk Pitt and his children, Dirk, Jr. and Summer, have reason to believe there's a connection here somewhere, but they also know they have very little time to find it before events escalate out of control. Their only real clue might just be a mysterious silvery mineral traced to a long-ago expedition in search of the fabled Northwest Passage. But no one survived from that doomed mission. . . Filled with the breathtaking suspense and audacious imagination that have become his hallmarks, this is a tour de force - further proof that when it comes to adventure writing, nobody beats Clive Cussler.”
 (“*Fantastic Fiction.*” Accessed Nov 15, 2016. <https://www.fantasticfiction.com/c/clive-cussler/arctic-drift.htm>.)

A Being Darkly Wise: A Novel of Survival by John Atcheson (fiction)

“Pete Andersen was hooked from the moment he read the ad: ‘Learn survival skills in the majestic peaks of British Columbia’s Eaglenest Mountains . . . Not for the faint hearted . . . ‘ Three months later, Pete and eleven others are dropped off in one of the most remote areas in North America with no way out. Pete believes he’s found paradise, but when his companions start turning up dead, apparently mauled to death by a rogue grizzly, paradise turns to hell.” (“*Amazon Books.*” Accessed Nov. 15, 2016. <https://www.amazon.com/Being-Darkly-Wise-Novel-Survival/dp/0985071214>.)

Heat by Arthur Herzog (fiction)

“Lawrence Pick, engineer, gathers startling evidence that the world’s weather may be rapidly changing. . . In a secret underground laboratory, he and a team of equally skilled scientists learn that the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. . . will ascend to the point where no living thing can survive. Pick’s predictions become a reality as freakish weather conditions prevail. . . but still neither the U.S. Government nor the people will listen. Too late, the result of man’s indifference is everywhere. . . with only one hope for survival.” (“*Amazon Books.*” Accessed Nov. 15, 2016. https://www.amazon.com/HEAT-Arthur-Herzog-III/dp/0595271499/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1479252557&sr=1-1&keywords=Heat%2%A0by+Arthur+Herzog.)

Heat Wave: A Social Autopsy of Disaster in Chicago by Eric Klineberg (non-fiction)

“On Thursday, July 13, 1995, Chicagoans awoke to a blistering day in which the temperature would reach 106 degrees. . . When the heat wave broke a week later. . . over seven hundred people had



perished...in the great Chicago heat wave, one of the deadliest in American history... Klinenberg uncovers how a number of surprising and unsettling forms of social breakdown—including the literal and social isolation of seniors, the institutional abandonment of poor neighborhoods, and the retrenchment of public assistance programs—contributed to the high fatality rates.” (“*Amazon Books.*” Accessed Nov. 15, 2016. https://www.amazon.com/Heat-Wave-Autopsy-Disaster-Chicago/dp/022627618X/ref=sr_1_fkmr0_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1479252765&sr=1-1-fkmr0&keywords=Heat+Wave+by+Eric+Klineberg.)

Nature’s Confession by J. L. Morin (fiction)

“The epic tale of two teens in a fight to save a warming planet . . . the universe . . . and their love. A cli-fi quest full of romance, honor, and adventure.” (“*Amazon Books.*” Accessed Nov. 15, 2016. https://www.amazon.com/Natures-Confession-warming-planet-universe-ebook/dp/B00RNY49G2/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1479255093&sr=8-1&keywords=Nature’s+Confession%C2%A0by+J.+L.+Morin+%28fiction%29.)

The Rough Guide to Climate Change by Robert Henson (nonfiction)

“*The Rough Guide to Climate Change* gives the complete picture of the single biggest issue facing the planet. Cutting a swathe through scientific research and political debate, this completely updated 3rd edition lays out the facts and assesses the options - global and personal - for dealing with the threat of a warming world. The guide looks at the evolution of our atmosphere over the last 4.5 billion years and what computer simulations of climate change reveal about our past, present and future.” (“*Amazon Books.*” Accessed Nov. 15, 2016. https://www.amazon.com/Rough-Guide-Climate-Change/dp/1848365799/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1479255483&sr=8-1&keywords=The+Rough+Guide+to+Climate+Change+by+Robert+Henson+%28nonfiction%29.)

The Stone Gate by Mark Mann (fiction)

“A strange rock in the forest. A mysterious crystal. A full moon. An ancient secret. How do you find your way home when you've never left? When Jack and Kaya see a dazzling white light shining from a giant rock in the forest, it takes them on an adventure to a place both familiar and yet like nowhere they know. But where exactly are they? And can they find their way back in time? *The Stone Gate* is a young adult fantasy adventure that explores the issue of climate change in a unique and exciting way.” (“*Amazon Books.*” Accessed Nov. 15, 2016. https://www.amazon.com/Stone-Gate-Mark-Mann-ebook/dp/B00MF0XOKQ/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1479256332&sr=8-1&keywords=The+Stone+Gate+by+Mark+Mann.)

Tipping Point by Simon Rosser (fiction)

“1903: The Arctic's fabled Northwest Passage is navigated for the first time. 2012: An eminent climatologist is found dead in his London apartment. Robert Spire, an environmental lawyer, is thrust into an international conspiracy involving a plan to push the Arctic to its tipping point, and the world to disaster...*Tipping Point* is a fast-paced climate-fiction action-thriller with a perfect blend of action, suspense, adventure and thrills to keep you turning the pages until the very end.” (“*Amazon Books.*” Accessed Nov. 15, 2016. https://www.amazon.com/Tipping-Point-Suspense-Eco-Thriller-Thriller-ebook/dp/B00540VB86/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1479255788&sr=8-1&keywords=Tipping+Point+by+Simon+Rosser+%28fiction%29.)



Waiting on the Bounty by Mary Knackstedt Dyck (nonfiction)

“Mary Knackstedt Dyck was a farmer's wife in Kansas for over 30 years, during that time she kept a diary written in pencil on notebook paper. This volume contains her entries for the years 1936 - 1941, the years of the dustbowl, which drove many farmers from their farms.” (“*Book Depository*.” Accessed Nov. 15, 2016. <https://www.bookdepository.com/Waiting-on-Bounty-Mary-Knackstedt-Dyck/9780877456940>.)