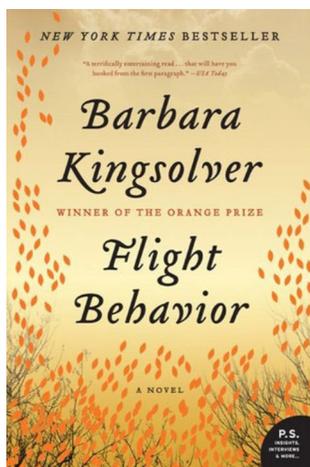




# Discussion Guide

## About the Book



Book Title: *Flight Behavior*

Author: Barbara Kingsolver

Published by HarperCollins, New York, 2012

Author Website: <http://www.kingsolver.com>

Book Website: <http://www.kingsolver.com/books/flight-behavior.html>

## Questions for Discussion

1. **What were your general impressions of the book?**
2. **What do you think Barbara Kingsolver was hoping to accomplish with this novel? Did she succeed? Why or why not?**
3. **Who was taking flight in this novel and what were those flights about?**
4. **Dellarobia's relationships were the centerpiece of the book. Describe her relationships with herself, Hester, Cub, Dovey, Ovid, her children. How did her relationships evolve through the story?**
5. **Did this book change your thoughts about climate change in any way? Explain.**
6. **Read over the MAMs comments. Which of the MAMs do you most agree with and why?**
7. **Would you recommend this book for other Book Clubs? Why or why not?**
8. **In what ways, if any, will this book change your life or perspective?**

*Other Discussion Guides can be found at:*

<http://www.litlovers.com/reading-guides/13-fiction/8988-flight-behavior-kingsolver?start=3>

<http://www.nicoleamsler.com/flight-behavior-discussion-questions/>

<http://groupreads.blogspot.com/2014/02/discussion-guide-for-flight-behavior.html> (includes links to monarch videos explaining their migration pattern)

<https://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/18945788-flight-behavior> (74 quotes from the book)

## Nancy and the MAMs discuss the book...



**NANCY:** I was so happy to find this book! Thank you Barbara Kingsolver for tackling this topic in a novel in such an artful and compelling way!

Over the past two years, I've come to believe that we must address climate change immediately, if we hope to sustain human life on our planet. And yet, the inertia around this concern baffles me. My husband and I have been involved with the Citizen's Climate Lobby, (CCL) a wonderful organization working in this area. They are growing rapidly and I am hopeful. And yet, it is very difficult to organize and engage people to action on this issue. So reading Kingsolver's book was such a wonderful experience for me. I find her writing quite beautiful. Choosing butterflies and the mystery of the monarchs to illuminate our crisis brought such depth to the book. The metaphor of flight also spoke to the desire the characters had to escape or move beyond their current circumstance. I do identify!

She did a great job portraying her main character, Dellarobia, whose life changed after an encounter with the monarchs on their mountain. She reminds me of the plight of Appalachian women who wish for more education and hope to do more with their lives. Such a well-developed character with compelling relationships and heroine status!

She described what I experience, working on the climate change issue. So many refuse to admit or believe we have a problem. The newspaper reporter interviewing the scientist Ovid Byron was priceless! Her descriptions ring true.

Kudos to Barbara Kingsolver for creating a bestseller on our crisis! I hope I can follow in your footsteps with further illuminating this topic in my next book—*Revelation at the Labyrinth!*



**SALLIE:** Well, as a retired kindergarten teacher, I always consider the children. I fell in love with Preston, the little scientist, choosing an encyclopedia over toys in the second hand shop. And how beautiful that his friendship with the Mexican refugee, Josephina, shed more light on the situation. And also, appreciated the portrayal of an excellent kindergarten teacher on the field trip!



**MOLLY:** Well, I've got to say that I appreciated the fact that the scientist in this story was a person of color. I loved this character, Ovid Byron, a monarch scientist and college professor, mourning the plight of the earth, and meticulously studying the situation with his students and volunteers. I loved his respect for Dellarobia and Preston. And when we finally met his wife toward the end of the book, she too was a beautiful person and theirs a very loving relationship. Thank you, Barbara, for choosing a person of color for this role!



**PRISCILLA:** I appreciated the way these faithful Appalachians deal with out of wedlock pregnancies. Dellarobia and Cub got married, even though Dellarobia had wanted to go to college. Hester gave her baby up for adoption. Neither of them chose abortion. That says something about these people and their values. They do the right thing.



**KATHARINE:** I thought Ovid explained well the problem with science and the media. Actually, it can be a problem for all of us academics. The media so often gets it wrong, or puts their own spin on the news to sensationalize the situation or tell the people what their sponsors want to hear. That's why many of the climate scientists have remained quiet. But they are becoming more vocal.



**JANE:** Go Dellarobia! Loved this strong character who took a job, over her husband's wishes and made some bold choices in the end to improve her position in life and use her God-given abilities. She tried to do the right thing, and eventually I think she found a way to fly in a positive way. I was surprised with the hopeful note that she brings to the ending of this novel! But I won't spoil it for you. Just make sure you read to the end!



**ABIGAIL:** As an environmental activist for many years, this book described so well the problems we face when we try to protect the environment. When we mess with people's livelihood, it's not easy. How we as a society can juggle the needs for the earth and economic well being is the defining issue of our time. We have to find the path to sustainable living or we will perish as a species. Many species are already extinct because of our actions. I pray we all work for this solution now.