

Amity and Prosperity

One Family and the Fracturing of America

by Eliza Griswold

Chapter-by-Chapter Reading Comprehension Questions

Instructions: Answer each question in a few complete sentences, using specific details from the assigned chapter. These questions are designed to check basic comprehension of plot, character, and key events before class discussion.

Part I: Hoopies

Chapter 1: Fair 2010

1. Where and when does this chapter take place, and who are the central characters Griswold introduces?
2. What details does the author give about Harley's health, and how might this foreshadow later events in the book?
3. What does the county fair suggest about daily life in Amity before the full effects of the fracking boom set in?

Chapter 2: When the Boom Began

1. What company approaches Stacey, and what does she hope to gain by signing a gas lease?
2. What hesitations or warning signs appear during the leasing process, and how are they handled?
3. What does this chapter reveal about the economic conditions in Washington County that make leasing land attractive to residents?

Chapter 3: The Mess Next Door

1. What physical changes take place on and around Stacey's property once drilling begins?
2. How do Stacey and her neighbor Beth Voyles react to the construction and its early effects?
3. What early signs suggest the drilling operation may cause more disruption than residents were told to expect?

Chapter 4: Arsenip

1. What happens to Harley's health in this chapter, and what do his medical tests show?
2. How does Stacey respond when she learns the results of her son's tests?
3. What connection does this chapter suggest between the fracking operation and the family's health problems?

Chapter 5: Airborne

1. What new environmental concern, beyond water, does Stacey begin to suspect in this chapter?

2. What evidence does she observe or gather regarding this concern?
3. How does Range Resources respond when air-quality concerns are raised?

Chapter 6: Hoopies

1. What does the term "hoopies" mean, and how has it historically been used to describe people from this region?
2. What does this chapter reveal about the history and identity of Washington County residents?
3. How does the outside perception of "hoopies" affect how residents' complaints are taken seriously?

Chapter 7: "One Head & One Heart, & Live in True Friendship & Amity as One People"

1. What is the origin of the town's name, and how does this chapter connect it to that history?
2. What irony does Griswold draw between the town's founding ideals and its present-day divisions?
3. How does this chapter illustrate growing divisions within the community over fracking?

Chapter 8: Doubters

1. Who doubts Stacey's claims about contamination, and what are their reasons?
2. What social or economic pressures lead some residents to side with Range Resources rather than their neighbors?
3. How does skepticism from others affect Stacey's efforts to get help?

Chapter 9: Hang 'Em High

1. What conflict or confrontation escalates in this chapter?
2. How does tension between pro-drilling and anti-drilling residents show itself?
3. What does the chapter's title suggest about the mood in the community at this point in the story?

Chapter 10: Blood and Urine

1. What medical testing does the family undergo, and what do the results show?
2. How do medical professionals or officials respond to these results?
3. What obstacles does Stacey face in getting clear answers about her family's health?

Chapter 11: Airport

1. What event takes place at the airport, and why is it significant for Stacey?
2. How does Stacey begin to go public with her story, and who takes notice as a result?
3. How does the author, Eliza Griswold, become personally involved in the narrative in this chapter?

Part II: Burden of Proof

Chapter 12: "Mr. and Mrs. Atticus Finch"

1. Who are the Smiths, and why might this chapter compare them to Atticus Finch?
2. What is Kendra Smith's professional background, and how does it prepare her for this case?
3. What decision do Stacey and Beth make about legal representation in this chapter?

Chapter 13: Mutual Distrust

1. What tensions exist between residents, the gas company, and government regulators in this chapter?
2. What examples of miscommunication or broken trust does Griswold describe?
3. How does this atmosphere of distrust shape the strategies of both the plaintiffs and Range Resources?

Chapter 14: Buzz

1. Who is Buzz, and what problem does he report?
2. How does his situation compare to Stacey's and Beth's experiences?
3. Why do the Smiths decide to take on his case as well?

Chapter 15: Missing Pages

1. What documents does Kendra Smith search for, and what does she find missing or altered?
2. What does this discovery suggest about how the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) handled the case?
3. How does this chapter deepen the reader's understanding of institutional failure or negligence?

Chapter 16: Rainbow Water

1. What physical evidence of contamination does this chapter describe?
2. How do Stacey and Beth interpret this evidence, and how does Range Resources respond to it?
3. What role does this evidence play in the larger legal case?

Chapter 17: "Dear Mr. President"

1. What action does someone in the community take to bring the issue to a national audience?
2. What kind of response, if any, comes from officials?
3. What does this chapter suggest about the limits of political engagement for rural communities?

Chapter 18: Insurgents

1. Who are the "insurgents" referenced in this chapter's title, and what actions do they take?
2. How does grassroots activism develop among residents affected by fracking?
3. What risks do activists face when they speak out against the gas industry?

Chapter 19: Burden of Proof

1. What legal standard must Stacey, Beth, and their lawyers meet, and why is it difficult to satisfy?

2. What specific evidence do the Smiths try to gather to meet this burden?
3. How does Range Resources' control over information affect the plaintiffs' ability to prove their case?

Chapter 20: Policing the State

1. What is Act 13, and what does it change about local governments' ability to regulate drilling?
2. How does John Smith challenge this law?
3. What does the outcome of this legal challenge reveal about the balance of power between state and local governments?

Chapter 21: What Money Does

1. How does fracking money change relationships and dynamics within the Amity community?
2. What examples does Griswold give of financial gain creating division among neighbors?
3. How does money complicate the plaintiffs' fight against Range Resources?

Chapter 22: Ruin Is the Destination Toward Which All Men Rush

1. What does this chapter's title suggest about its tone or central theme?
2. What setbacks or losses do Stacey and her family experience in this chapter?
3. How does the family's financial and emotional state change as the legal case drags on?

Chapter 23: Remote People

1. Who or what is described as "remote" in this chapter, and in what sense?
2. How does geographic or social isolation affect the residents of Amity and Prosperity?
3. How does this isolation shape the way outsiders — media, courts, corporations — treat the community?

Chapter 24: Ignorant Motherfuckers

1. What exchange or conflict prompts this chapter's title?
2. What does this moment reveal about outside attitudes toward rural communities affected by fracking?
3. How do Stacey and her allies respond to being dismissed or insulted?

Chapter 25: A Special Agent

1. Who is the "special agent" introduced in this chapter, and what is their role?
2. How does this person's involvement affect the investigation or legal proceedings?
3. What new information comes to light because of their involvement?

Chapter 26: Full Metal Jacket

1. What escalation in conflict or tactics does this chapter's title suggest?
2. What legal or personal battles reach a turning point in this chapter?

3. How does the Smiths' work on behalf of Buzz conclude?

Part III: The Right to Clean Air and Pure Water

Chapter 27: The Right to Clean Air and Pure Water

1. What constitutional or legal principle does this chapter's title reference?
2. How do the Smiths use this principle in building their legal strategy?
3. What historical context does *Griswold* provide about environmental rights in Pennsylvania?

Chapter 28: Dreams

1. What hopes does Stacey and her family hold onto at this stage of the case?
2. How do these hopes contrast with the realities of their day-to-day situation?
3. What does this chapter reveal about the emotional toll of a years-long legal battle?

Chapter 29: Closing Down the Ponds

1. What happens to the fracking waste ponds in this chapter?
2. What environmental or regulatory reasoning leads to this decision?
3. How do Stacey and her neighbors react to this development?

Chapter 30: Chasing Ghosts

1. What, or who, are Stacey and the Smiths figuratively "chasing" in this chapter?
2. What frustrations or dead ends do they encounter while pursuing accountability?
3. How does this chapter convey the emotional exhaustion of a prolonged legal fight?

Chapter 31: "The Junkyard Plaintiff"

1. Who is referred to as "the junkyard plaintiff," and why?
2. What tactics do Range Resources or its lawyers use to try to discredit the plaintiffs?
3. How do Stacey and her allies respond to attempts to undermine their credibility?

Chapter 32: Diva

1. Who is described as a "diva" in this chapter, and what does that label suggest about how they are perceived?
2. How does public perception of Stacey shift over the course of her activism?
3. What personal cost does Stacey pay for her visibility in the case?

Chapter 33: Fair 2016

1. How does the 2016 fair compare to the fair described in the opening chapter, "Fair 2010"?
2. What has changed for Stacey, her family, and the community over these six years?
3. What does the return to the fair suggest about resilience, or about how much remains unresolved?

Epilogue and Postscript

Epilogue: White Hats

1. What does the phrase "white hats" refer to, and who might it describe?
2. How does Griswold resolve — or leave unresolved — the central conflict of the book in this epilogue?
3. What final reflection does the epilogue offer about justice and accountability in rural America?

Postscript

1. What updates or additional information does Griswold provide in the postscript?
2. How does the eventual settlement affect Stacey, Beth, and the wider community?
3. What broader lessons does the postscript suggest about the long-term costs of the fracking boom?