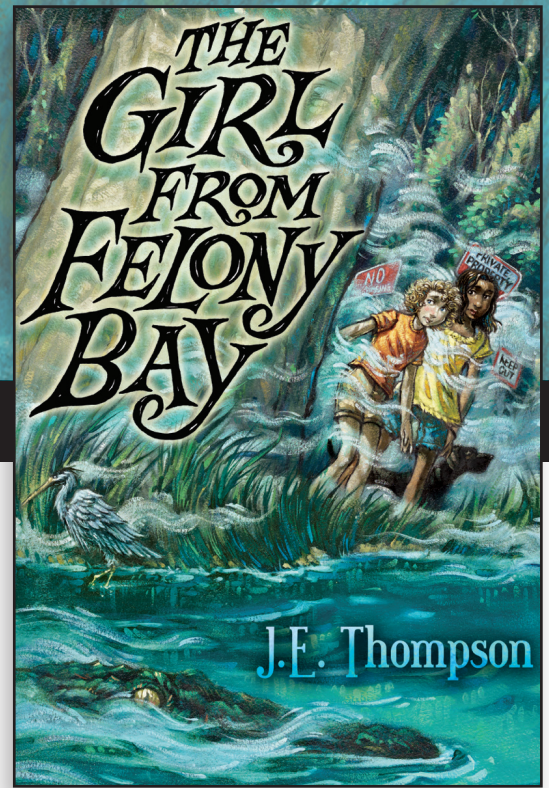


# THE GIRL FROM FELONY BAY

BY J. E. THOMPSON

## DISCUSSION GUIDE



### ABOUT THE BOOK

Abbey Force has had a rough year. Her dad is in the hospital in a coma since his accident a year back, which was part of his being framed for a terrible crime he didn't commit. Her home, Reward Plantation, has been sold off to pay his debt to society, so Abbey is stuck living with her uncle Charlie, who, even in the few hours a day when he's sober, isn't exactly your ideal parental role model. And, to make matters worse, she's managed to run afoul of Jimmy Simmons, the meanest kid in the sixth grade.

But then a girl named Bee moves into Reward Plantation, and she's just as curious as Abbey about all the NO TRESPASSING signs and holes being dug out by Felony Bay, in the corner of what used to be Abbey's home. The girls soon find themselves in the middle of a mystery that dates all the way back to the Civil War, and Abbey and Bee are determined to find out what's happening in Felony Bay—and maybe even clear Abbey's dad's name.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. As the story opens, Abbey Force, the narrator, lets the reader know her ancestors were “tough. They were big-time risk takers; they had fast tempers and didn't pull any punches” (page 2). How does Abbey demonstrate these traits throughout the book?
2. What does Abbey mean when she says several times in the first chapter that everything has changed?
3. Abbey's uncle Charlie has nicknamed her Squib (pages 18–19). What's a squib? Why would Uncle Charlie give Abbey this nickname, given what you know about their relationship?
4. Why didn't Abbey's grandfather split Reward between Uncle Charlie and Abbey's father? As the story begins, why is this matter now a major problem for Abbey (pages 22–23)?
5. In chapter two, Abbey has “one of [her] dreams,” the first of three in the book (page 26). Why are her dreams so important to her? How does color figure into them?
6. At the end of chapter three, Abbey tells the reader she's going to find a way to prove that her father is innocent. Why does Abbey want to clear her father's name?
7. When Abbey visits her father in the hospital, she reads from *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens because she “couldn't think of any more good lies to tell” (page 44). Read the following passage from the opening of that book. Why might Abbey be drawn to these lines, given all that has happened in her life?  
  
*“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way. . .”*

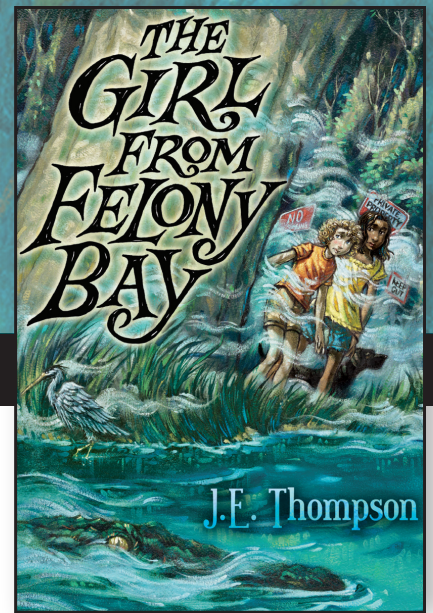
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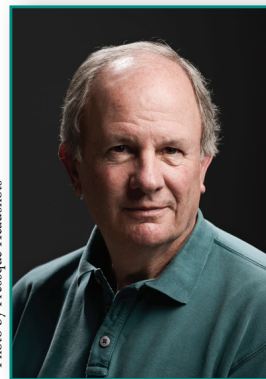
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8. Abbey's father told her that the book *Slaves in the Family* by Edward Ball had hit him like "a ton of bricks" (pages 52–53). What does Abbey's father mean? How does the book relate to Abbey's family and her relationship with Bee? Why does Abbey apologize to Bee?
9. Where is Bee's father and why? Why is Abbey interested in this information?
10. As they explore Reward Plantation together in chapter seven, why does Abbey tell Bee the stories about One Arm Pond and Green Alice? What else do you learn? What does the list of questions at the end of the chapter (page 87) tell you about Abbey's determination to prove her father's innocence?
11. Why does Abbey say, "We need to get the facts" (page 98)? Where has she learned about the importance of finding out the truth? Where does the pursuit of facts lead her and Bee?
12. What is the big secret Bee is holding back about her own family? Why is she afraid to tell Abbey?
13. How do Abbey and Bee differ in their views of Miss Lydia Jenkins? Why do they have different opinions?
14. When Abbey and Bee visit Abbey's father's office, Martha tells Abbey, "Don't thank me. I know what your daddy's made of" (page 123). Why is this statement so meaningful to Abbey? Why is the fact that Martha has said it also significant?
15. Explain heirs' property. What role does it play in the book? Why is it critical for Abbey to understand it?
16. What is the difference between "the letter of the law" and "the intent of the law" (page 190)? As a lawyer, how does Abbey's father view these two ideas? Why are her father's opinions important to Abbey?
17. What is Uncle Charlie and Bubba Simmons's motive for burying the chest?
18. Who are Timmy and Clem? How do they help Abbey and Bee?
19. Abbey delivers a long confession to her father in chapter twenty-two. Why does she think her confession may have made things much worse (page 269)?
20. Why does Jimmy Simmons end up doing the right thing at the end of the novel while Mr. Barrett does not?
21. Abbey reflects that she thinks she finally knows some of the answers to why people do what they do (pages 372–73). What traits are involved? What does she mean when she concludes that "who a person is deep down can be a moving target" (page 373)?

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



**J. E. Thompson** spent twenty-five years as an investment banker before becoming a writer. He lives in Charleston, South Carolina, not too far from the bays and plantations that inspired *The Girl from Felony Bay*, his first children's book.