

## **Danny Gospel Discussion Questions**

1. If you had to pick one adjective to describe Danny as a character, what would it be and why?
2. Each member of the Gospel family lives out their own—often extreme—"belief" system. Whose resonates with you most? How did such divergent viewpoints live—and sing—in harmony?
3. Who was the woman in white who kissed Danny on the lips?
4. How does Danny embody the historical and literary tradition of "holy fools" and how does he deviate? What's the root of his actions—madness, faith, intention, or something else?
5. Music is a crucial part to Danny's life and one piece of him coming unmoored is the fact that it's been silenced. For Danny, he's drawn to spirituals. They represent him and embody what he wants to feel. What music—song or artist or genre—captures your essence? If you were called to write a song of your life, what it would be? And is there a kind of expression or an activity that, if taken from you, would change who you are completely?
6. Who in your own life has suffered the most? How did they respond to it? What place do hope and/or faith play in dealing with suffering? Do you think Danny's hope and faith in the face of suffering were just a false front that repressed the pain or did they help with healing?
7. What role did Danny's journey to Florida play in helping him? Is the Florida in the novel closer to Paradise or Hell? Have you ever had an experience where leaving your everyday world has given you new insight or changed you?
8. The miraculous feels closer to the surface in the world of Danny Gospel. Did miracles occur in the book or were they merely everyday occurrences being misinterpreted by Danny as signs from God? Who decides what is a miracle?
9. What was the craziest thing you've ever pursued or decided or done? How does that experience seem now? Would you do it again?
10. For Danny, the family farm is his corner of Eden. Describe yours. How is his idyllic vision affected by the realities of farming life in Iowa today?
11. In the end, what was Danny truly seeking on his quest?

12. What's your impression of the novel's conclusion? Is Danny better off, worse off, or unchanged? Has he been healed? Is he still broken? What comes next?