

Discussion Questions *The Frontiersman's Daughter*

1. Life in the eighteenth century was difficult and dangerous. How would you have responded to the hardships of that time? Grudgingly, like Sara Click? With the cheerful tenacity of Ma Horn? Or with the courageous spirit of Ezekial Click? Would you have been among those who left the more civilized East to cross the mountains into Kentucky?
2. What perceptions does your reading group have about Kentucky or Appalachia in general? Are any of the novel's characters stereotypical of that region? How do you feel about the Indians being displaced by settlers during that turbulent time? Did you understand Ezekial Click's unusual, even ambivalent, relationship with the Shawnee? Were you sympathetic to Sara's relationship with Ned Click? What would you have done in similar circumstances?
3. Lael is at home in the woods, and becoming an herbalist is second nature for her. How does this skill fit her personality? What traits made her unsuccessful as a teacher? Which of these traits, if any, do you see in yourself?
4. Ezekial's treatment of Lael is not always that of a loving father, such as when he surprises her in the woods with the Shawnee. Later he sends her to finishing school in Virginia. Do you feel he was right in doing so? What do you think his reasons were for sending her away? How might he have handled that differently?
5. Ian tells Lael he feels God called him to Kentucky. Have you ever felt that God led you to a particular place or situation? How did you respond?
6. One of the novel's themes is forgiveness. Lael has an unforgiving spirit, and Ian is quick to discern that. How does unforgiveness bind us and place us in danger? How does it hurt us more than the person we choose not to forgive?
7. Proverbs 27:6 tells us, "Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but deceitful are the kisses of an enemy." Ian becomes the truth teller in Lael's life as he both befriends and confronts her. Is there a truth teller in your life? Have you responded with hard-heartedness, like Lael, or with humility? Do you think Ian was right to confront Lael? How might he have better related to her without angering her as he sometimes did?
8. Ma Horn says that heartache sometimes comes from "getting what you want and finding out it ain't what you thought it would be." Do you agree? What might life have been like for Lael with Simon or Captain Jack? When have you ever wanted something badly and then later been relieved or even grateful that things didn't turn out as you'd hoped?

9. At first Ian is intrigued with Lael, and then he falls in love with her. What did you find attractive or endearing about Lael? What did you find displeasing? Which attributes of Ian's do you think won Lael over? Do you think they're a good match? Why or why not?
10. What expectations did you have as you began reading *The Frontiersman's Daughter*? What hopes did you have for Lael by the book's end? What surprised you? Pleased you? Troubled you?
11. Author E.L. Doctorow said, "Good writing is supposed to evoke sensation in the reader. Not the fact that it is raining, but the feeling of being rained upon." Were you able to get a feel for the sights, sounds, and tastes of eighteenth-century Kentucky? Did that world come alive for you as you were reading? What stood out to you?
12. Lael's name is of Hebrew origin and means "belonging to God." God intervened in Lael's life in many ways throughout the novel. Can you name them? In your own life, how has God guided you, protected you, and blessed you, perhaps even before you knew Him?