

Reading Group Discussion Questions for *The Whole Golden World*:

What do you think of Rain's loyalty to TJ for much of the story? How does her pregnancy affect her feelings toward TJ and the case against him?

Why do you think Rain believes so strongly in their relationship as the story begins, despite problems that were already brewing regarding his mercurial moods and their infertility? Was her steadfast belief in their marriage admirable?

Why do you think Dinah and Joe are so disconnected as a couple when the story begins? Is it common for difficult family issues to drive spouses apart?

How much responsibility do Dinah and Joe Monetti bear for what happened to Morgan? Would the story have gone differently if the twin Monetti brothers had not been born with physical and learning challenges?

Why do you think TJ refuses to admit what he's done when the police finally discover the affair? Do you think he believes his own stories?

Why do you think TJ had a sexual affair with his student despite the kind of damage it would cause?

Do you think Morgan was manipulated into the affair? Or did she choose her actions of her own will?

Do the respective ages of TJ and Morgan affect their individual accountability for their affair? Does it matter that she's only a few months from legal adulthood when their affair begins? Does it matter that he's only twelve years older than she is? How much does it change the situation that he's her teacher?

Do age limits written into law – for drinking, military service, smoking, voting, consensual sex – make sense? Does their arbitrary nature make them problematic, or are they simply a practical and moral necessity?

What does it mean to be an adult? And do either Morgan or TJ meet that definition?