



4. Arlene has painted a picture of Clarice as beautiful, pure, passive, and wholesome. How does idealizing Clarice influence Arlene's own behavior and sexuality?
5. Arlene's biological mother is almost a non-person in the book, and Arlene has surrounded herself with replacement mothers. Who are these replacements, and what aspects of mothering does she get from each of them?
6. The women in this novel generally tend to overpower the men, whether in conversation, romance, or physical altercations. Is this indicative of Southern society in general? What point might the author be making about gender relations in an outwardly traditional society?
7. The main character in this book is alternately known as Arlene and Lena. What are the distinguishing characteristics of Arlene? Of Lena? How do you think she would identify herself? By the end of the book, had she changed in your mind from one to the other, or had the two been integrated?
8. Arlene has clearly rehearsed a confession for years and years. How do you think her commitment to this retelling of the events of the past has shaped her current course of action?
9. Who is Jim Beverly? How do you reconcile the "pure-hearted, sole good man" Rose Mae Lolley has ever known with the scoundrel on Lipsmack Hill that fateful night?
10. What role does the Southern locale play in the novel? Could such a story take place in another region? Why or why not?
11. Forgiveness and atonement are two of the major themes in this novel. Who do you believe has done the most genuine atoning in this story? Who has the biggest sin to forgive?
12. Arlene baldly states that she is a game player, and she plays both literal and metaphorical games with Burr and the other characters throughout the novel. She is also, on some level, playing a game with the reader. How did you react to this? Do you think she played "fair"?

#### Author Bio

Joshilyn Jackson is the *New York Times* bestselling author of seven novels, including *GODS IN ALABAMA* and *A GROWN-UP KIND OF PRETTY*. Her books have been translated into a dozen languages. A former actor, Jackson is also an award-winning audiobook narrator. She lives in Decatur, Georgia, with her husband and their two children.

#### Critical Praise

"Southern heroines rarely leap off the page as full of life and trouble as Arlene Fleet, the headstrong protagonist and erstwhile alter ego of young Atlanta writer Joshilyn Jackson, whose marvelous debut, **Gods in Alabama**, is fixing to slap some sense into modern Southern fiction.....**Sweet Home Alabama** meets **Guess Who's Coming to Dinner** as Arlene stumbles toward a redemption that even Rhett and Scarlett would never have imagined. Foulmouthed and hilariously frank, Gods in Alabama is just the shot of sour to counter the diabetic-coma-inducing sweetness that seems to have overtaken Southern literature lately."

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**Gods in Alabama**  
by [Joshilyn Jackson](#)

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