



The Insect Farm – Questions for Discussion

1. Roger Maguire's insect farm plays a central role at several key moments in Stuart Prebble's psychological thriller. At one point of the story, Jonathan becomes convinced that were the farm to have never existed, none of the tragedies that befell his family would have taken place. Do you agree with Jonathan's assessment? Why or why not? What aspects of the Maguire brothers' story, if any, do you think would have occurred regardless of Roger's hobby? What might have been different?
2. Did you consider Jonathan a likeable narrator upon first meeting him? Why or why not? Did you find him to be reliable? Did your perception of him change as the novel advanced? If so, when and why?
3. Throughout the book Roger remains an enigmatic character; we often don't know exactly what he's thinking. Do you feel sympathetic towards Roger? What are the ethical implications of a person with a mental handicap, such as Roger, playing God throughout the narrative? Did he do the right thing?

4. Discuss Jonathan's relationship with Harriet. Did you feel Jonathan was right to feel jealous about Harriet's friendships with other men? Did your feelings change once the truth was revealed?
5. If you were in Harriet's shoes, what would you have done differently? Do you think she deserved her fate? Why or why not? How much responsibility does Harriet bear for the tragedies that befall the Maguire family?
6. What are the similarities and differences between the two brothers? Which one were you drawn to the most and why?
7. Who is your favorite character in THE INSECT FARM? Which character did you like the least? Did any of these characters remind you of someone you know?
8. If you were in Jonathan's position after the house fire, would you have made the same decision as him? If so, why? If not, what would you have done differently?
9. Both Jonathan and Roger take care of each other in different ways throughout the novel. Which brother do you think sacrificed more for the other's well-being?
10. When Jonathan came to and found Harriet beside him, were you sold on his assumptions about the situation? Were you shocked by the truth, or did you suspect all along?
11. How do you understand the scene in the prologue? Did you have a guess in mind throughout the read as to the identities of the deceased? Did your assumptions change throughout the course of the novel? Did you guess the truth, or were you surprised to learn the truth at the end of the novel?