

Reader's Guide for
Hush my Mouth by Cathy Pickens

1. Why did you decide to read about Avery Andrews? The character, the plot, the location, something else?
2. In the book *Hush My Mouth*, Avery has made steps toward settling back into her hometown as a small-town lawyer. Do you see her as ever becoming a wealthy person, practicing law as she does? That used to be important to her. Has anything changed?
3. Avery seems to run into more than her share of people who have odd views of the world around them. What's your reaction to that?
4. Do those who live in small towns know more people who would be considered "different"? Do they tend to accept them as part of their daily lives and take them as they are? Why or why not? Do we welcome the strange and out-of-the-ordinary people into our lives, or do we tend to push them away because we are a little wary of the way in which they might intrude on what we consider safe behavior?
5. People who live in small towns where the populace has remained more or less static for several years have, of course, known the same people for years. The person who has moved away for a while and then returns to the area has to face the questions as to why she had to come back. Is Avery handling this aspect of her life well? What choices that Avery has made would you have chosen differently? Avery could have gotten a job in another law office in a larger city. Why do you think she came back home?
6. Readers often wonder about Avery's love interests – or lack thereof. Who would you say might emerge as that love interest?
7. Avery explores the nature of families – both formal and informal families. Is blood thicker than water? Can ties with friends be stronger than family ties? What can create – or damage these ties?
8. Did the murderer surprise you? Why do "cold cases" hold such a fascination?