**The Scent of Rain and Lightning
by Nancy Pickard**

**About the Book**

One beautiful summer afternoon, Jody Linder receives shocking news: The man convicted of murdering her father is being released from prison and returning to the small town of Rose, Kansas. It has been twenty-three years since that stormy night when her father was shot and killed and her mother disappeared, presumed dead. Neither the protective embrace of Jody’s three uncles nor the safe haven of her grandparents’ ranch could erase the pain caused by Billy Crosby on that catastrophic night.

Now Billy Crosby is free, thanks to the efforts of his son, Collin, a lawyer who has spent most of his life trying to prove his father’s innocence. Despite their long history of carefully avoiding each other in such an insular community, Jody and Collin find that they share an exclusive sense of loss.

As Jody revisits old wounds, startling truths emerge about her family’s tragic past. But even through struggle and hardship, she still dares to hope for a better future—and maybe even love.

**About the Author**:

Kansas mystery author Nancy Pickard has created a twisted and tangled world of deception through sixteen modern day novels and the detailed developemnt of several enticing characters, her latest work being The Scent of Rain and Lightning. Mrs. Pickard resides in Prairie Village, Kansas, and spends a great deal of time traveling between Florida and her home. A multitde of her short stories have recieved recognition including th Agatha, Anthony, Macavity, and Shamus awards for her short stories and the Agatha, Anthony, and Macavity awards for her novels. The Los Angeles Times says, “Pickard pushes at the presumed limits of (crime fiction).” The San Diego Union says, “Nancy Pickard is acclaimed as one of today's best mystery writers.

**If you enjoyed this book*:***

* Fragile by Lisa Unger
* The Nobodies Album by Carolyn Parkhurst
* Crooked Letter, Crooked Letter by Tom Franklin
* The Map of True Places by Brunonia Barry
* Hidden Wives by Claire Avery

**Discussion Questions**

1. Why do you think Pickard chose to title her novel The Scent of Rain and Lightning? How does she use weather and landscape as symbols in her writing?
2. How does Jody's place in the community change after her father's murder?
3. How is Collin's life affected?
4. What role do the residents of Rose have in Billy Crosby's conviction?
5. The Linders are portrayed as the most influential family in the county. What responsibility comes with such influence? Do any of the Linders abuse their power, despite their good intentions?
6. Though Hugh Linder Sr. is clearly the patriarch of the family, is he really the most powerful figure in the clan?
7. Having read the novel, do you think it’s better or worse to live in a small town when dealing with a personal tragedy?
8. What is the significance of the Testament Rocks?
9. Even with the best intentions, good people can make terrible mistakes. Do you think the Linders had good intentions? At what points did those intentions go wrong?
10. What clues in the book led you to guess the true identity of the killer? Who do you think the real murderer is?
11. Do you think Pickard laid sufficient groundwork for the discovery of the killer’s identity to be believable? Can a person really hide their true character from so much family so successfully for so many years?
12. The Scent of Rain and Lightning revolves around the theme of revenge. What does this novel tell us about the nature of revenge?
13. The theme of forgiveness also plays a large role in the novel. How does the story reveal the challenges of forgiveness? Are the characters clearly in one camp or the other (revenge or forgiveness)? If so, how would you divide them? And which characters, if any, bridge these emotions?