



## A Redbird Christmas (2004)

By Fannie Flagg



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### Discussion questions taken from Litlovers

1. Describe Oswald Campbell at the beginning of the story. How did he come by his name...and how might his naming incident be symbolic of the life he has led (so far)?
2. Fannie Flagg seems to be having fun with names in this novel: not just Oswald's name, but also the name of Lost River. In what way do many of its residents fit the name of the town? What have some of them lost...or missed out on...?
3. Who are your favorites among the cast of characters and why—Betty Kitchen, Roy Grimmitt, Frances Cleverdon, Claude Underwood, Mildred, Dottie ...? (Exclude Jack or Patsy; we'll get to them next.)
4. Jack, the redbird...do you love him? How does he "serve" the community? In what way does he foreshadow what happens to both Patsy and Oswald?
5. Talk about Patsy and her plight. Why is she so drawn to Jack? And why is Lost River so drawn to her?
6. Healing is a central motif in this novel. Who gets healed in this book—and in what ways? And, more importantly, what enables healing to occur? What is Flagg suggesting about the power of community?
7. Can you relate the sense of community in *A Redbird Christmas* to where you live? What are the attractions, or drawbacks, of a tightly-knit group of people? What other types of community are there? In other words, what do we mean by "community"... what makes a community?
8. Why is this book and its title centered around the Christmas holiday?
9. Talk about the ways in which this book might be considered a fable, as well as a novel?
10. Do you find this book satisfying—is it what you hoped for? Is it too sweet, or saccharine, for your taste? Or is it just right—its sweetness cut by Fannie Flagg's wit? If you've read other works by Flagg, how does this one compare?

### Author Bio:



- Real Name—Patricia Neal
- Birth—September 21, 1944
  - Where—Birmingham, Alabama, USA
  - Education—University of Alabama
  - Currently—lives in Montecito, California

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Fannie Flagg's writing career began behind the scenes of television's *Candid Camera* and progressed to out-in-front as performer-writer. Her acting achievements led to roles in motion pictures including *Five Easy Pieces*, with Jack Nicholson; *Stay Hungry*, with Jeff Bridges and Sally Field; and, most recently, *Crazy in Alabama*, with Melanie Griffith. For the theater in New York she did *Patio Porch* and *Come Back to the Five and Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean*, and played the lead role in the Broadway musical *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*.

Her first novel, *DAISY FAY AND THE MIRACLE MAN*, was on the *New York Times* bestseller list for ten weeks. Her second, *FRIED GREEN TOMATOES AT THE WHISTLE STOP CAFE*, praised by Harper Lee and Eudora Welty, was on the *Times* list for thirty-six weeks. It was made into the memorable hit movie *Fried Green Tomatoes*, starring Jessica Tandy and Kathy Bates. The screenplay, also written by Flagg, earned her the coveted Scripters Award and was nominated for an Academy Award and the Writers Guild of America Screen Award. Her reading of the Random House audiobook received a Grammy nomination.

That book gave way to an even bigger hardcover success for *WELCOME TO THE WORLD, BABY GIRL!*, a *New York Times* Notable Book of the Year, which *The Christian Science Monitor* called "captivating . . . a comic novel to open with open arms." Flagg lives in California and in Alabama.

#### Read Alikes:

*Winter stroll* by Elin Hilderbrand

*The mistletoe promise* by Richard Paul Evans

*Citrus County* by John (John Owen) Brandon



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