

1. One of the quandaries at the heart of Michael Ondaatje's novel is reconciling Rose Williams's bravery, indeed her patriotic heroism, and her treatment of Nathaniel and Rachel. How do readers, and especially her (fictional) children, wrap their heads around this inconsistency? How are we to consider Rose?
2. What do you make of Moth and Darter? As Nathaniel, in the opening lines, puts it, "our parents left us in the care of two men who may have been criminals."
3. Consider this passage from the novel and how it might be said to sum up one of the story's central concerns:
We never know more than the surface of any relationship after a certain stage, just as those layers of chalk, built from the efforts of infinitesimal creatures, work in almost limitless time.
4. *Warlight's* structure is anything but linear as it shifts back and forth in time and point of view. Is it confusing? Might the structure be a reflection of Nathaniel's own confusion: his sense of being able to see reality only dimly—as if through "warlight"?
5. *Follow-up to Question 4:* What are your thoughts on the second section of the novel with its sudden switch from to the third-person perspective? Did you find it difficult to integrate this outside voice into the overall narration?
6. "The lost sequence in a life, they say, is the thing we always search out," Nathaniel tells us. How has that "lost sequence" of Nathaniel's life shaped who he is? When he and Rachel discover that the reason their mother gave for leaving them was not the true reason, how did her lie make them feel? What lasting repercussions does her untruthfulness leave?
7. What does Nathaniel resolve within himself by the novel's end—what understanding has he come to? Or are things left unresolved for him—and for us? Is there a satisfactory resolution at the conclusion?