

Discussion questions for *North of the Tension Line* by J. F. Riordan

Discuss the significance of the title. Who or what was “tense”? Discuss different definitions of tension line. How does the title relate to Wisconsin’s tension zone—the zone between the southern prairie savanna and the northern forest?

Why do you think Fiona accepted the dare to live on Washington Island through the winter?

How is being a tourist in Door County different from living there year round?

Have you ever lived on an island or other remote place? Would you like to live on an island or other remote place?

Discuss the character of Stella. Do you have any sympathy for her? Why is she such a bully? What do you think she will do next?

Discuss the character of Robert the goat. How does this character add to the story? It is unclear what happened to Robert in the fire. What do you think happened to him?

What do you think of the other characters—Elisabeth, Roger, Pete, Terry, Mike, and Pali? Do you think Roger has Asperger’s Syndrome? Do you know people like Terry and Mike? Do you know anyone like Pali who writes poetry?

If you could ask the author one question about this book, what would it be?