

# RUNAWAY POET

By Myra Nagel

## QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

[www.MyraNagel.com](http://www.MyraNagel.com)

1. Why did Anna decide to volunteer as a child advocate , working with children who have been abused, neglected, or abandoned?
2. How would you describe 15-year-old Ben? Why did he write poetry? Why were his poems so weird?
3. How did Anna break through Ben’s wall of silence? Did he ever come to trust Anna completely? Why or why not?
4. According to the Institute of Medicine’s 1996 report to Congress, of all abused substances, alcohol produces by far the most serious brain damage in the fetus—more than crack, meth, tobacco or heroin. What are some ways Jessie showed the effects of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder? Why do you think Jessie’s FASD wasn’t diagnosed until he was 11?
5. Who did you initially suspect as Jessie’s killer? Why? Did your suspicions change as the story progressed? How?
6. What was the impact of Hurricane Charley on this story?
7. What was the role of religion in this novel? For which characters was it used helpfully? For which harmfully?
8. Did you learn anything from reading this book (other than “Who Done It”)? If so, what?
9. Before reading this book, were you familiar with the work of volunteer Guardians Ad Litem? (Nation-wide, they are part of C.A.S.A.—Court Appointed Special Advocates.) Do you know anyone who does this kind of volunteer work? Would you be interested in serving as a volunteer yourself?
10. Would you recommend this book to a friend?