

The End of the Wild

By Nicole Helget

1. What is fracking?
2. What are some arguments for and against fracking?
3. What is Fern's prized possession? Why is this so important to her?
A recipe book, it was her mother's
4. Who is Miss Tassel? Why does she keep visiting Fern's house?
A social worker, making sure that Toivo is taking proper care of the kids
5. How does Ranger, the dog, get injured in the story?
He is hit by a car while saving Fern and her brothers
6. What was Fern's STEM Fair project?
A field guide to all edible food in the woods
7. (Page 163) Fern says, "Toivo thinks I don't understand the constant itch of being poor, how it's always a bug biting your back in a place you can't reach." How does her family's poverty affect Fern? How does Fern use foraging to help?
8. (Chapter 8) A major theme in this book is forgiveness and acceptance. What do you think Toivo means when he says, "One of these days, you're going to have to cut the duck from Millner's neck, too"?
9. Fern has many responsibilities for an eleven-year-old. Do you think she deals well with these struggles? How do you deal with difficult situations or stress?
10. (Page 193) – Toivo tells the social worker that the kids will struggle with him, "but it is an honest kind of struggling." What does he mean here? With this in mind, would you rather have a hard life or an easy life?
11. Fern often seems to be stuck between "a rock and a hard place." Give some examples of times when Fern gets caught in the middle between two points of view, and discuss how she tries to resolve these issues.
12. What does Fern think of Horace Millner? Why do you think she has this opinion?
13. Briefly describe Margot, Mark-Richard, and Alkomso. In what way does Margot seem different from Fern, Mark-Richard, and Alkomso? What would each of them do with the \$250 prize from the STEM contest?

14. How does Fern feel about her grandfather? How does she feel about Toivo? Based on what is known of each character, how would you describe Fern's grandfather? How would you describe Toivo?
15. Why is there tension between Toivo and Grandpa? Given what you know about Toivo and Grandpa, which home would you choose for Fern and her brothers?
16. What happened at Mark-Richard's house? How does Fern react when she hears this? What happens when Fern goes to Mark-Richard's? What role does Ranger play?
17. What additional information about Mark-Richard does Margot share with the class? How do her classmates react? What is your opinion of Margot?
18. Why does Fern say, "It is almost like, for a brief second, Alkomso and Margot are on the same side"? How might this development change Fern and Alkomso's friendship?
19. What are some of the lessons Fern learned from her mother? How do these lessons still influence Fern today?
20. How does Fern's knowledge of forest plants help Alkomso's little brother? Do you think this is important knowledge? Why or why not?
21. What does Fern discover when she goes to the fracking site? What might this discovery mean?
22. Fern states, "It seems like all the kids I know are at the mercy of the whims of grown-ups." Do you agree with this statement?
23. What conclusion can you draw about the way Mr. Millner feels about fracking? How is this related to the reason Mr. Flores and Mr. Millner are together in the woods?
24. Based on Miss Tassel's interview with Toivo, how does Toivo feel about being a father?
25. As Miss Tassel and Fern discuss fracking, Miss Tassel says, "Adults have to choose between a rock and another rock all the time." What does she mean by this? How is this related to Toivo's job and Fern's desire to save the woods?
26. If you were one of the judges, which project would you choose as the winner?
27. What agreement do Toivo and Grandpa come to regarding custody of Fern and her brothers? What does this show about how Grandpa and Toivo have changed?
28. Do you think this book has a happy ending?