

Book Club Discussion Questions for *A Matter of Mercy*

1. Do you find Caroline likable? Does your opinion of her change through the course of the novel? What about Rid?
2. One of the reasons Rid kept walking after his first night with Caroline was that he didn't have any idea how he was "supposed" to respond. He muses to himself—what difference was it supposed to make that the child Caroline hit was deformed? *Was* it significant? If so, how and why?
3. What was your reaction to Terry? Were you sympathetic to John's moving on? In Terry's place, would you have confronted Caroline immediately instead of calling Boo or done the same thing?
4. How did you feel about the way Eleanor's death was portrayed?
5. Did you agree with Tomas' direction to Rid regarding not using a cell phone to call help for Mario when the three partners were out celebrating on Great Island? Why or why not?
5. Although the novel is narrated from "close" or "tight" third person points of view, very frequently the reader knows a good deal more than the character in whose point of view the story is being told at any given time. One advance reviewer said he sometimes wanted to shake a character for his or her misjudgments. Did you have that reaction?
7. How do you see the setting as affecting the primary characters in *A Matter of Mercy*? Has the geography and culture of where you're from affected you as deeply?

8. Did you agree with Rid or with Caroline about not pressing charges? Why?
9. Mercy is an issue that's variously raised in the book, both the gift of it and the withholding of it. Did this bring to mind any instances in your own life when you've either received or been denied mercy—or witnessed either?
10. **Spoiler Alert!** [Articles from The Cape Cod Times](#) explain what happened after the close of the book between the owners of the shallows out to the low water mark and the upland home owners. What is your reaction to the behavior of the aquaculturists? Do you see anyone's behavior—either the person originally bringing suit, or now, the aquaculturists, as selfish? Vengeful? Fair and right?