

THE ONCE *and* FUTURE CELT
BY BILL WATKINS

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 Like most twenty-one-year-old males, Bill has an eye for women. How are women portrayed in *The Once and Future Celt*? How does this relate to the Celtic view of women?
- 2 Gypsies suffer a negative reputation, especially in Europe, as thieves and beggars. How did Bill's time in their camp change your view on Gypsies?
- 3 Riena can neither read nor write and can only count to twenty, but Bill believes "her days are as full of achievement as most folk." Do you agree?
- 4 Even though Bill's father is Welsh and mother Irish, they make their life in England, a country that neither considers home. How does being a Celt in the dominant English culture affect how they raised their only child?
- 5 When Bill's father takes him to their ancestral homeland, he reveals that the family has rights to a piece of farmland. Bill remarks that they could have been living there instead of the trailer where he spent much of his childhood. Do you agree with Reg's decision to keep the land secret at the expense of his family's comfort? Do you think Bill made the right decision not to pursue a claim?
- 6 Explain Bill's interest in the King Arthur legend.
- 7 The primary language Bill uses is English. Yet Welsh, Irish and Scots Gaelic, and Romany – all very different languages from English – are key to Bill's quest for self-discovery. Discuss how Bill's identity rests on using English in conjunction with the other languages.
- 8 Discuss the roles of spirituality and organized religion in the book. Do you think some of the claims about the Roman church could be considered blasphemous?
- 9 Bill's adventures take place on the cusp of the twentieth century's Celtic revival. How has Celtic identity found its place in both the political spectrum and pop culture today?
- 10 Bill's father gives him a task to keep the Celtic culture alive. How has this book fulfilled that wish?