

## Broken For You Reading Guide

1. How is Margaret portrayed in the beginning? How is her diagnosis an inciting force for change? Talk about her growing appreciation of the uncommonness of common things.
2. In the clamor of the first armload of plate crashing, Wanda "suddenly knew that she had found a home with someone who was as deeply aggrieved and crazy as she was. It was tremendously comforting" (p. 133). How does the Hughes house provide a haven and structure for these women to pass through madness to sanity?
3. When Wanda reflects on her life in the theater, she says, "You're part of this intense family for a while, and then everyone moves on" (p. 165). How does Troy shift the rules?
4. How much is it possible to know another person? What are the limitations imposed on the characters, both by accidents of history and by their own actions? Who keeps secrets and why?
5. What do we learn about Margaret's mother? How does she function in the book?
6. Did you find conflicts between traditional values and newer ones?
7. How is the theme of the quest important in the book?
8. "Once the door is open...you can't shut it again, impose limits, set degrees of openness..." (p. 126). In what ways do Margaret and Wanda, and later Gus and M.J. irrevocably make themselves available and vulnerable to life?
9. What does it mean to bear witness in this book? "Margaret had been given the privilege of bearing witness to Wanda's life" (p. 126). What other characters participate in this act? Why does it matter?
10. Talk about the title. To how many characters and things and ways of life does it pertain? What is meant by a "dissolution of borders" on page 269?
11. What were the funniest parts of the book for you? Think of Irma, with her dry survivor wit as well as her bolder humor. Recall Maurice whose clumsiness is a boon in the Hughes house. And Margaret's outrageous mother. Talk about other moments of high or low comedy.
12. The china, both whole and in pieces, generates stories. In Chapter Thirty-two, the narrator addresses the reader directly, "Pay attention. Let your mind embrace metaphors. It's your first clue about what goes on here" (p. 337). How do these quotations help us understand multiple levels of the story?

Adapted from [www.readinggroupguides.com](http://www.readinggroupguides.com)