

## Flame Out

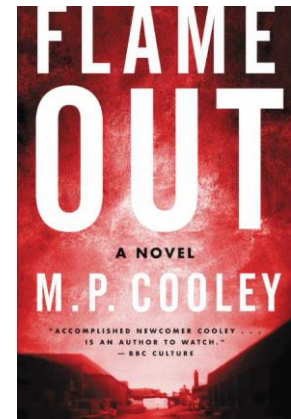
William Morrow

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### Introduction

June Lyons, the former FBI-agent-turned-small-town-cop introduced in the acclaimed *Ice Shear* must solve two connected cases whose roots stretch back decades in time—and dangerously touch the lives of those closest to her.



### Questions for Discussion

1. Most of the people affected by the murders in *Flame Out* live on DeWulfe Island, which is separated from Hopewell Falls by a small inlet. How does the experience of living on the island affect these Ukranian immigrants? What might have drawn them to the Island? In what way are they different from June and the other residents of Hopewell Falls?
2. Everyone on the Island seems to despise Vera's memory, even her own son. Are they right to feel so little sympathy for her? Do you? Is she to blame for her own death?
3. Famka describes Natalya as being like a mother to her nephews but "Not like huggy, kissy mother...like mother bear. Strong, and fierce, and protective." How does Natalya compare to the other mothers we meet: Luisa, Vera, Elda, and June's mother?
4. Bernie has spent decades in prison for a murder he didn't commit, yet he seems remarkably unbroken by the experience, and reluctant to seek vengeance. If you were in his shoes, how would you react?
5. Dave Batko has many roles in this story: a cop, son of a murder victim, a brother, and a friend to June. Does June's close relationship to him affect the way she investigates his mother's murder? Does Dave's relationship with his brother and aunt affect his ability to work the case as a detective?
6. June is forced to confront the fact that her father, who she idolized, helped send an innocent man to prison. How does her perception of her father change because of the Bernie Lawler case? How does the arrival of her mother further affect the father-daughter dynamics?
7. Was Luisa right to disappear? How does her sudden, improbable reappearance affect the people she left behind?

8. June tells Dave: "You know, prison is a very real possibility for Natalya." And he replies "She wouldn't have it any other way," What do you make of Natalya's rough justice? Knowing what we know about her, did it shock you?
9. What do you think will happen to the Judge? To Natalya? How will the tight-knit Ukrainian community on the Island move forward now that all these secrets have been uncovered?
10. Do you think that June Lyons should remain in Hopewell Falls or should she rejoin the FBI? What will drive her decision one way or the other?
11. At what point did you deduce who was the killer? Did you have any other suspects, and if so, why?