***The Rubber Fence***

**Book Club Questions**

1. The book begins with Joanna visiting her grandmother in a seniors’ home. Why do you think the author began her story this way? Is it effective?
2. Joanna is apprehensive when she sees the electro-convulsive therapy room. Since she isn’t a patient, is her fear valid?
3. Mental illness is a complicated health problem. What was your impression when you first read about the various patients on ward 2B?
4. This story takes place in 1972, when feminism was just spreading its wings. When Dr. Sam Berman interviews the rape victim, were you shocked by the staffs’ reaction to the session? Do you feel much has changed since then and why?
5. Theresa, the young mother, has problems at home. It appears that what happened there tipped the edge for her. Do you believe that environment plays a big role in mental health and why?
6. Joanna and Michael have a tense relationship. When both husband and wife work outside the home, it’s easy to give into temptation when there is marital conflict. When you were reading the novel, were you sympathetic to both and why? And if not, why not? Rose is an elderly woman who’s been zapped too many times. When Dr. Myron Eisenstadt criticizes Joanna about being too emotional in her treatment, did you agree with him? Can therapists care too much about their patients?
7. On ward 2B, the psychiatric staff use black humor to get through the day. What are your thoughts on this? Is it appropriate? Is it understandable in their line of work?
8. In the early 1970s, there was much sexual experimentation going on. It was the age of the swingers. Michael believes the authors make a good point in their book, Open Marriage. Do you?
9. Shock treatment is still in use today. It’s also being used by psychiatrists on some patients suffering with Alzheimer’s. The thinking is: if ECT can calm a patient and/or lift their mood, isn’t it worth trying, even at the expense of some memory? What are your thoughts on this controversial therapy?