Catherine Ryan Hyde Book Club Questions *Where We Belong*

1. When asked about building houses out of cards, Angie says, “It’s a lot of work for something that’s always going to fall down at the end. But then all of life is like that, right?” Do you agree with this perception? Do you think Angie would have a different view if her life had been more stable?
2. Throughout most of the book, Angie has to be the mother in the family. She states that from age fourteen, her whole life was about “Drop. Wait. Breathe. Or don’t.” In what ways does Angie’s mother force her into this situation? Do you think Angie had any other options?
3. Angie’s sister, Sophie, is out of control and impossible to stop when she is shrieking. Often, she physically assaults Angie to the point where she has bruises or needs stitches. Do you think the family is making the right choice in having Sophie continue to live with them?
4. Sophie bonds with the neighbor’s dog Rigby, but can’t bond with anyone or any other dog. Angie explains this by saying, “It’s not what the dog looks like but what’s on the inside that she likes.” What is it about the dog that calms her? What do you think Sophie is tuning into?
5. Angie has dreamt of going to Tibet for many years. What do you think the destination symbolizes for her?
6. When Angie and her mother and sister become homeless and have to live in a campground, Angie finds out that they’re not the first to be in this situation. She tells the campground manager that she thought it was just them, and that everyone else had it all together. Have you ever felt that way? Why do you think this type of thinking is so prevalent?
7. When the Rigby dies, Sophie, who is right beside the dog, stops moaning and becomes calm. Angie thinks that it’s because wherever Rigby is now, she’s happy, and that her sister feels that. What do you think?
8. The theme of death is prevalent within the book, starting with Angie’s father, her aunt’s husband, Paul’s brother, and ultimately, Rigby. At one point the bookstore owner tells Angie, “That part of us goes on, and there are choices when we leave our body.” Do you think people have choices after they die? What about animals?
9. Angie reflects on how Paul says he wants to be alone, but really doesn’t. Paul says that bringing people into your life always brings complications. Do you think Angie made the right decision sharing Paul’s confidences with Rachel? Did the outcome justify this betrayal?
10. Angie wants her mother to buy a home, but her mother is ashamed to even apply for a loan. What do you think finally changed her mind? How much input does Paul have toward getting the loan and why?