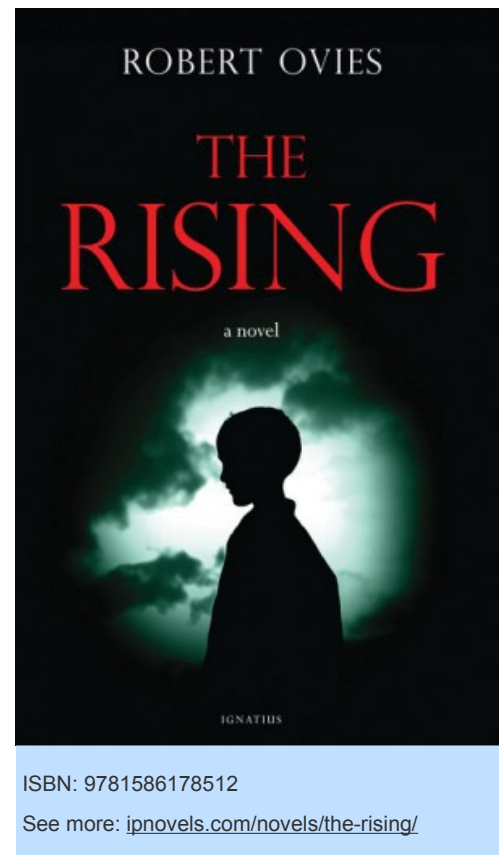


## Discussion Questions for *The Rising*

1. *The Rising* is a novel about resurrections; several being physical, several more being personal and spiritual, one being lost like a fallen angel in the mix of other things. Discuss how you might see a resurrection story working itself out in Joe Walker. In Lynn. In C.J. In Father Mark. In Cardinal Schaenner. In Anthony Cross.
2. Is Bennington Reed a sympathetic character to you? Discuss what characteristics you see in him, and how you feel about him as a person.
3. Fear, especially in the face of the unknown, can be a dramatic motivator. Consider the novel's main characters, including Bennington Reed. What fear do you think might be a principle driving factor in each of them. How does it show itself, and how—if, in fact, it's overcome—does that show itself?
4. Does Bennington Reed's theory of humanity's undergoing a still-to-be-completed evolution into a level of virtual omnipotence strike you as being nothing more than one character's off-the-wall fancy? Or do you think that his stated point of view might, in fact, be showing itself to be alive and well in some very real and influential segments of our culture today?
5. What specific steps and/or cautions might you have suggested to Lynn if she had asked for your advice immediately after her home became a place under siege and her son became such a visible and vulnerable target? Discuss your reasons for giving her whatever advice you think might have been most help to her.
6. Would you have advised Joe and Lynn to let the physical exam and escape to the Vatican with the cardinal take place as the cardinal had initially suggested? Why, or why not?
7. What would you have said to Lynn if she had begged for your advice immediately after she heard the cardinal's plan to globally televise her son's raising a dead man to life again, this time in the cathedral itself? Discuss your reasons for whatever specific advice you'd have most wanted to offer her?
8. Think about and discuss what you would do if you found out that someone in your immediate family, perhaps even your own child, was actually able to bring dead people back to life, and to do it with just a touch and a few simple words.
  - What would you do with that initial breath-taking secret? How would you feel about it? What steps would you take as your first active response?
  - Would you be more excited about the reality of that, or more frightened by it? Why?
  - Do you think you might want to try and direct, or use, or somehow control that power yourself? Discuss what kinds of opportunities for good occur to you along those lines.
9. What do you think would happen to C.J. in real life if the heart of this novel's plot was proven to be an honest-to-goodness fact?



- In what ways do you think the government would react? Discuss some possible scenarios, and discuss any specific merits or threats you can envision in each one of them.
  - In what ways do you think the medical/scientific communities would react? Again, discuss possible scenarios, and discuss any outstanding merits or threats you recognize in each of them.
  - How do you think people of religious faith—whether Christianity or other global faiths—would be likely to react to what C.J. Walker was claimed to have done, and why? What kind of scenarios can you envision being played out? And to what end, either as merit or threat?
  - In what ways would you react? And why?
10. In the gospel, Jesus sends out disciples with instructions to share the good news, and specifically, in doing that, to “raise the dead.” (Mt 10:8). Do you think it would change the course of your life in some foundational, life-long way if you actually saw that happen today? Or (as may well be the case) do you think that it might amount, and in fairly short order, to simply being one more unanswered question followed by more of business as usual? Discuss your thoughts and your “reasons why” with the other members of your Book Club.