



Discussion Questions

1. At the start of the story, a doctor gives Leonard a Rorschach inkblot test. Even though he doesn't tell the doctor what he sees, we know they remind him of *The Dukes of Hazzard*. Does his real reaction reveal something about Leonard to the reader? How telling do you think this type of psychological test is?
2. Which character's point of view can you relate to most easily? Why?
3. Even though we know what's coming, the outcome can be difficult to accept. Were there any points where you found yourself thinking perhaps Christopher wouldn't be killed? What moments had you hoping the inevitable wouldn't actually occur?
4. Mildred, Doc, Squib, Hazel, and Hunger all believe they are partly to blame for Christopher's murder. Do you agree with any of them?
5. How would you describe Doc and Squib's relationship? Will it last long-term? What could they each do to make their friendship last? If you weren't privy to their thoughts and feelings, what would you think of their dynamic?
6. What do you think the author hopes to convey about guilt and innocence?
7. So many minor aspects of the story could have occurred only slightly differently and completely changed the outcome. Can you think of any moments you might consider turning points, when there was no going back from the fate laid out for Christopher?
8. If Christopher hadn't given Leonard and Lance a ride that night, do you think Leonard would have killed someone else?
9. How would the story have been different if the author hadn't told it from so many points of view? Imagine if Doc alone told the full story, or Mildred, or one of the others. How might the story—and your reaction to it—change in each case?
10. What will be the biggest changes in each character after the events of *Deadwood Days*? How do you predict Christopher's death might affect the behavior and worldview of Mildred, Hazel, Hunger, Doc, Squib, and Leonard through their next few years and into adulthood?
11. Leonard is so sure that his smile can get him out of anything and that he belongs in leading roles on-screen, but in a cruel twist he does end up playing a main part in this story. Why does he view the world through this lens of television and movies (like *The Dukes of Hazzard*)? Do you expect he'll ever change or understand what he did?
12. How does the desire for revenge come into play for different characters?
13. Mr. and Mrs. G prove that proclaiming to be devout and righteous isn't the same as actually being good Samaritans. Why are their attitudes and their brand of indifference particularly insidious?
14. How much of Leonard's behavior is because of who he is as a person and how much is due to his unfair upbringing in the foster care system? Can either element be considered independently from the other?
15. None of the characters know Christopher Goodman well; they each have an idea or assumption of who he is instead of an actual understanding. Many of them put him into a box because of the way he dresses, the music he likes, and the things he says. If we had been able to read Christopher's perspective, what do you think it might have been like?

