

Acceleration

1. Of what significance is the title "Acceleration" in terms of both the plot and character development?
2. Discuss the symbolism in the novel. For example, the significance of Duncan's job being in the sub-basement.
3. What significance do you think Duncan's nightmares had in terms of the course of action he took?
4. What did Duncan discover about the way the mind of a serial killer works? Is there a "profile" of a certain type of person who might become a murderer?
5. Did the author provide a satisfactory ending? How would you change it?
6. Has the book invoked any thoughts about your own safety? What changes do you think you would make in your routine and do you think any of these changes would deter a serial killer?

Schooled

1. The story is told in the words of several different characters. Did this make the book more interesting? Why or why not?
2. When he started middle school, Cap had a lot to learn about the world beyond Garland Farm. What are some of the most important things Cap didn't know? How did those make his life at school difficult?
3. Many other characters eventually learned a lot from Cap. Who do you think benefited the most from getting to know him? Why?
4. Why did Zach think it was so important to make Cap look foolish?
5. After starting out as Cap's friend, why did Hugh Winkeman turn against him? Did his reasons make sense?
6. Sophie "declared war" on Cap from the beginning, but ended up liking him a lot. What words or actions from Cap made the biggest difference in the way Sophie thought of him?

If I Grow Up

1. Why would a book be called "If I Grow Up" ? Have you ever doubted that you will live to be 18 and then live on to middle and to old age? Tell why or why not. What do you think this title suggests about at least one character in the book?
2. Do you believe attaining your dream future has to do with where you grow up, your friends, neighborhood and the quality of middle school and high school training you get? If yes, why? If no, why not?

Grade 9 Literature Circles
Discussion Questions

3. If you could get easy and quick cash to improve your family's lifestyle or help with needed medical or living expenses, would you do anything, even if illegal and with some chance of being caught? Why yes or why no-explain.
4. If most of your peers and all of your friends are using drugs, part of gangs, and skipping school, plus have much more cash than you have, would you ultimately break down and do what they do? Or would you hold out and do what is right?
5. Is someone who leads a gang, a completely evil person doing drugs, committing violent acts and organizing teens to do crimes? If yes, why and if no, what redeeming qualities, if any could this person have.
6. If you do live in an inner city where there are well organized gangs, would reading or thinking about gangs and how they impact on peer's lives who live among, be relevant to you as a teen. Why yes or why not?
7. AFTER READING THIS – Look at question 6. If you are not from a project and no gangs are in or near your school neighborhood, are the issues here important for you. Why yes or why not?

Sold

1. What is Lakshmi's life like in her Nepal mountain home? What events create the need for her to go into the city?
2. Discuss the vignette entitled "Everything I Need to Know Now." What do you think of the cultural mandates that she must live by? Compare it to the vignette of the same title that appears later when she is in the city. How does it represent all the changes in her life?
3. Did you suspect bad intentions on the part of the "auntie" and "uncle" who escorted Lakshmi? Why do you think Lakshmi herself was not suspicious? What does this show you about her character?
4. What things does Lakshmi wonder about on her journey? What ordinary objects fascinate her? How does this innocence help seal her fate?
5. How does Mumtaz gain control over Lakshmi? What tactics does she use to own her both physically and emotionally? What punishment does she exact on girls who disobey or betray her?
6. For the festival of brothers and sisters, Harish gives Lakshmi a new pencil. This small act of kindness undoes her. Why do you think this "undoes" her? How do others reach out to help one another at the brothel?
7. What does despair look like? How does Lakshmi prevent her own despair from destroying her hope? Is it destroyed in others? How?
8. What was the most disturbing part of this story for you? What facts crawled under your skin and continue to haunt you? Do you think there is anything you can do to help? What?

Little Brother

1. In your opinion, is the novel a warning about our future?
2. Is Mark Yallow a role model?

3. Do we live in a police state today?
4. "Never trust anyone over 30." They meant that people who were born before a certain time, when America had been fighting enemies like the Nazis, could never understand what it meant to love your country enough to refuse to fight the Vietnamese. They thought that by the time you hit 30, your attitudes would be frozen and you couldn't ever understand why the kids of the day were taking to the streets, dropping out, freaking out." So here's the question: what is it that your parents' generation has trouble understanding about your generation and why? In your answer, make reference to the conditions and experiences of both generations.
5. In your opinion, do you think the government has a right to investigate all individuals if they are under some type of suspicion?

Final Takedown

1. Who is the protagonist and who is the antagonist?
2. Describe the friendship in the story. Is it supportive? Is it real? Would you like to have a friend like that?
3. What is the theme in this book? The universal message that applies to everyone? Put it in a theme statement.
4. Can you connect to any part of this story? Does it remind you about something that has happened to you? Someone you know? Another story? Each group member is to connect and share.
5. Is there any part of the book that seems unreal to you? Why?
6. Has this story changed your thinking in any way? (Transformed your thinking?) If you say "no", then explain which parts are predictable.
7. Which point of view is this story told in? Was it effective? If you were the author, would you have chosen the same point of view? Why or why not?

Street Pharm

1. Ty Johnson's story is told in the first person. Why do you think the author chose to tell it this way? What are the advantages and disadvantages of using the first person?
2. Why would the author choose someone like Alyse as Ty's love interest?
3. Loyalty plays an important role in this novel. Discuss the place of loyalty in at least three relationships. For example: Ty and Orlando, Ty and Clarissa, Ty and Monfrey, Ty and Michael Brown, Darkman and Crow, etc.
4. Consequences play a crucial role in this novel; Ty discovers that no action is without them. Describe a time where you came to understand the meaning of consequences.

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5. Discuss the character: Rob Monfrey. How does Ty's interaction with him over the course of the book show the evolution of Ty's character?
6. Ty believes that his intelligence is enough to keep him from falling victim to the possible downfalls of his line of work. Is this a realistic view, in your eyes?
7. The ending of *Street Pharm* has been praised for being hopeful and redemptive, and criticized for being Hollywood and unrealistic. Why do you think the author chose to end Ty's story this way? How do you feel about the ending?