

Discussion Questions for *Terrapin*

1. What are the predominant themes in *Terrapin*? Which of these themes is most meaningful to you?
2. How does *Terrapin* speak to friendship? What do each of the boys and Lori bring to their corporate friendship?
3. What does the kick the can scene reveal about the five friends?
4. In what ways can T. A. Cole be considered the pivotal character in *Terrapin*?
5. How does T. A. leaven the relationship between Alvin, Delia, and Jonas, and the neighborhood at large?
6. Why is Lori Linus one of the foundational characters in the story? How are Lori and T. A. similar?
7. What role does Peter Kristov play in the story and Dennis' life?
8. Speculate about the significance of the hippocampi, frog hunting, Gordie, and the turtle references.
9. What does the Bob-Lo Island scene reveal about Dennis and Greg?
10. What makes the boys' surreptitious entry of the Macklin home more than just irresponsible curiosity?
11. How does your perception of the Macklins change as the story progresses?
12. Contrast Dennis and Carly Carlson as children with their meeting as adults in Kellogg Park.
13. Linda Linus is featured in just one chapter, but she is an influential character. Why?
14. When (and how) does Madeline Bridgeman intersect the lives of the four boys/men?
15. How does Dennis' interaction with the Macklins and Bridgemans mimic the man who was responsible for the deaths of his mother and brother?
16. To what degree do pathological obsession and willful choice operate in Madeline/Maddie/Eva?
17. What did the legless man reveal to Dennis about Greg Pace?
18. Consider points of similarity between *Terrapin* and *To Kill A Mockingbird*. What are some significant differences?
19. What, if anything, does the ending of the story tell you about Dennis' future trajectory?
20. How is human freedom framed by T. A., and in what ways is human freedom explored in the story?
21. How is *The Deadly Dart Mystery* connected to the main story? Can you think of another novel that contains a composition by a character in the story?

