



# #1 KIDS' INDIE NEXT PICK

## THEMES FOR DISCUSSION

Racism  
Honesty  
Prejudice  
Compassion

Gun Violence  
Bullying  
Remembering the Past

Justice  
Privilege  
Grief  
Friendship

## Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think the novel begins with Jerome's death? How did the alternating time periods affect your reading of the story?
2. Why does Carlos bring a toy gun to school? Why might he feel like it is the best way to protect himself from bullies?
3. Why does Jerome take the toy gun even though it feels wrong?
4. Had you heard about Emmett Till before reading *Ghost Boys*? If so, what did you know about him? What did you learn about him?
5. Why is Sarah the only person who can see Jerome and Emmett?
6. At the court hearing, the defending lawyer accuses Officer Moore of "racial bias" (page 86). What does he mean? How can a person be biased without realizing it?
7. At the hearing, Officer Moore says, "I was in fear for my life" (page 131), and that is why he shot Jerome even though Jerome was running away. Jerome wonders, "When truth's a feeling, can it be both? Both true and untrue?" (page 118). Why is the truth so hard to determine in these situations?
8. How did you feel when the judge announced that Officer Moore would not be charged with a crime? Why do you think Jewell Parker Rhodes chose this verdict?
9. Before Jerome moves on, he convinces Sarah to speak to her father about fighting racial prejudice even though she doesn't want to. Why is this Jerome's final act?
10. At the end of the book, Jerome realizes that he and the other ghost boys are able to communicate with certain people so they can "bear witness" to the ghost boys' stories. What does this mean? How does bearing witness tie into the statement, "Only the living can make the world better" (page 203)?
11. After reading this novel, how can you make the world better?