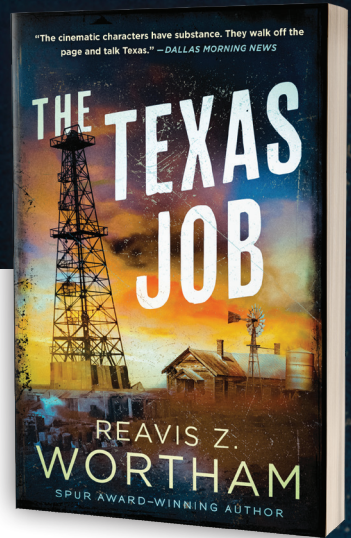


THE TEXAS JOB

BY REAVIS Z. WORTHAM

DISCUSSION GUIDE



1. *The Texas Job* opens with “The buckskin’s hooves landed with soft thuds on the sandy East Texas road. The early autumn air was unusually dry and cool as scissortails dodged and darted over a wide pasture on my left.” How does the atmospheric detail make the landscape a compelling character in the novel? Does the landscape shift with Tom’s moods, or is it imposing its own will?
2. Lawmen are often depicted as brooding and complex. What’s your first impression of Tom Bell? What does he make of the scene when he meets Booker? What kind of lawman will we expect to see?
3. Tom and Booker report finding a body to Sheriff Dobbs. Why is he less than eager to solve the crime? What does he stand to gain by hesitating?
4. “Articles I’d read in the past months were concerned about the dry conditions that moved east as steady as a clock. An article quoting *Progressive Farmer* magazine predicted an upcoming drought that would rival anything the country had ever seen.” What part does the climate play in *The Texas Job*?
5. The prospect of getting rich in the oil business proves irresistible to many. What kind of people are moving into the area? What are the forces behind their move? Consider the workers versus schemers. Where do the schemes fall apart? Why?
6. In the 1930s, Prohibition is on its last legs. Is it surprising that Al Capone’s name keeps coming up in Texas?
7. What are the roles of women in the novel? Consider how the town’s wives play into the conspiracy concocted by a wide array of “upstanding” citizens. What about Charlotte? How does she change the course of *The Texas Job*?
8. Tom is deeply invested in others playing by the book but will often bend the rules himself. Consider who is fit or allowed to play by their own rules and why.