

Alternate Assignment for *Stand By Me* – “The Body” by Stephen King

For this assignment, you will read “The Body” by Stephen King.

As you read the story, you will respond to 8 short-answer questions.

Then, when you have finished reading the story, you will respond to 2 final prompts by writing 2 thoughtful paragraphs.

Instructions:

1. First, before you read the story, please answer question 1 below.
2. Then, as you read each section of the story, answer questions 2-8.
3. Finally, once you have finished reading the story, answer questions 9 and 10 each in a thoughtful paragraph.

Before you read:

1) In this story, the writer remembers his life when he was twelve years old. What can you remember about being twelve? Who were your best friends? Do you still see them? Why, or why not?

After you read CHAPTERS 1-7

2) Why don't Charlie Hogan and Billy Tessio tell the police about the dead body?

After you read CHAPTERS 8-11

3) Chris and Gordie look in each other's eyes and see “some of the true things that made us friends” (18). What “true things” do you think they see, and what relevant evidence do the scene and their conversation show us? Also, what qualities do you think are important in a friend? Why?

After you read CHAPTERS 12-15

4) Which boys cry, or almost cry, in these chapters? Why? What do their tears reveal about each of them?

5) What do you think Gordie's dream is really about? What relevant evidence does the scene show us?

After you read CHAPTERS 16-20

6) Which two sentences listed below about Gordie are true? To support your answer, find and the sentence in the story that provides evidence showing which two statements below are true.

- A. He thinks that life is more fun if you don't think too much.
- B. He thinks that most people are only interested in the bad things in life.
- C. He thinks that people are happier if life is hard.
- D. He thinks that things seem less important if they happen too easily.

7) What does Gordie find most shocking about the boy's body? Give a supporting quotation.

After you read CHAPTERS 21-27

8) Why do you think Chris cries after Ace Merrill and his gang have gone? Give relevant evidence from the scene to support your answer.

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE AFTER YOU HAVE FINISHED READING THE STORY. →

AFTER YOU FINISH READING THE STORY:

Reread these two excerpts from Gordie and Chris' conversation in Chapter 13:

'You're still young, Gordie—'

'Thanks, Dad.'

'I wish I was your dad,' he said angrily. 'If I was, you wouldn't be going around talking about taking those stupid shop courses. It's as if God gave you something—all those stories—and said, "Here you are. Try not to lose it." But children lose *everything* unless somebody is there to help them, and if your parents are too stupid to do it, maybe I ought to.'

He looked like he was expecting me to try to hit him. His face was unhappy in the late afternoon light. He had broken the unwritten rule. You could say what you liked to a guy about himself, but never say a bad word about his parents.

'If you stay with us just because you don't want to lose the gang,' Chris went on, 'you'll turn into just another guy with no good use for his brains, except to make clever, cruel remarks about other people. You'll never escape Castle Rock. You'll think it's important to have the right kind of car and then the right girl. And then you'll get married and work in the factory or some shoe shop for ever. Is that what you want?'

Chris Chambers was twelve when he said all that to me, but something in his face as he spoke was older, ageless. It was as if he had lived that whole life already, and his words made me frightened. He understood the loser's life so well. He seemed to know what I was thinking. (36)

'People. People drag you down.'

'Who?' I asked, thinking he must mean the teachers, or his brother Eyeball, or maybe his parents.

But he said, 'Your friends drag you down, Gordie. Don't you know that?' He pointed at Vern and Teddy, who were standing and waiting for us to catch up. They were laughing about something. 'Your friends do. They're like drowning guys who are holding on to your legs. You can't save them. You can only drown with them.'

'Come on, guys,' Vern shouted. 'Don't be so slow!'

'Yes, coming,' Chris called, and before I could say anything else he began to run, but he caught up to them before I could catch up to him. (38)

9) Interpreting Meaning

Discuss this topic in a thoughtful paragraph:

What do you think Chris means when he says that "children lose everything unless somebody is there to help them" (36)? What exactly does Chris think Gordie is going to "lose," and why? Based on their conversation, which valuable qualities do you think all children possess that Chris seems to be talking about? Moreover, what specific aspects of life and growing up do you think can cause children to lose these qualities?

10) Theme – Friendship

Discuss this topic in a thoughtful paragraph:

Chris tells Gordie: "Your friends drag you down, Gordie. Don't you know that?... They're like drowning guys who are holding on to your legs. You can't save them. You can only drown with them" (38).

- Does the story show that this statement is true, false, or a combination of true and false? Which specific characters in the story have this kind of negative effect on their friends, and which specific characters in the story do not have this kind of negative effect on their friends? Give evidence from the story.
- In your opinion, is Chris Chambers a rare, remarkable kind of friend, or is Chris Chambers a typical, ordinary friend? What specific aspects of Chris' character and actions make you say so? Give evidence from the story.