



Discussion Questions

Reservation Road by John Burnham Schwartz

1. Source: Madison Public Library
2. Amazon.com called the novel a thriller, a tragedy and an experimental novel. Agree? Did all three aspects of the novel appeal to you? Was one element more strongly written than another?
3. Ethan and Grace react differently to the death of their son. Michiko Kakutani in the New York Times writes "it is Mr. Schwartz's authoritative depiction of his characters' inner lives... that makes this novel so compelling to read." Did you imagine yourself in their shoes? Do you have any idea how you would react? Would it be like Ethan or Grace?
4. Dwight is torn about turning himself in, and does feel true guilt. He is a not a cartoon character, but a multidimensional 'villain.' Or is he a 'villain'? Did you find yourself having any understanding of him? Sympathy?
5. Two sets of fathers and sons are the focus of the book, really. Did you gain new insight into that dynamic by reading this novel?
6. Did you resist reading this novel due to its subject matter? Are you glad you read it? How would you suggest it to others so that they would read it? A two sentence plot description may turn many readers off. Is there another way to describe the book so it sounds like a must-read?
7. Schwartz gets much praise for his writing style. Were there particular passages that you marked or that were especially notable to you?