

Stand By Me Film Summary

Stand By Me by Rob Reiner

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Context

Stand By Me celebrates the carefree days of boyhood and the friendships forged during the everyday adventures. Four boys, Gordie, Chris, Teddy and Vern, have created their own group and spend the long summer days hanging out in their tree house playing cards and smoking cigarettes. When Vern's older brother sees the dead body of a boy who was missing, the group decides to find the body and receive the fame after they notify the police. They go out on their big adventure and along the way have life-changing experiences. After the death of one of the group many years later, a much-older Gordie writes the story down so that he can share the pain and joy of his childhood journey.

Gordie tells of the experiences the boys have out on the road. They begin their transformation into men with this journey. They learn important lessons about independence, friendship, honesty and integrity while they travel. A much older Gordie realizes that this day and a half changed him forever and that those were the best friends he could have ever had. No one ever has friends like the ones they have when they're twelve years old.

Rob Reiner is one of the top American directors, and many of his films are compelling love stories. Before *Stand By Me*, Rob Reiner had successfully directed *This Is Spinal Tap* (1984) and *The Sure Thing* (1985). Of the three, *Stand By Me* was probably the most commercially popular film. Later films by Reiner include *The Princess Bride* (1987), *When Harry Met Sally* (1989), *Misery* (1990), *A Few Good Men* (1992), and *The American President* (1995). If Reiner is directing a film, its success is almost guaranteed.

Wil Wheaton plays the role of young Gordie. He got his start by starring in the Bill Cosby Jell-O commercials as a child. Today, he primarily focuses on writing projects, although he does periodically appear in films such as *Neverland* (2003). Perhaps his role as the child Gordie somehow inspired him to pursue his current writing career.

River Phoenix plays the role of Chris Chambers. He later appeared in *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989), *Running on Empty* (1988), *My Own Private Idaho* (1991) and *The Thing Called Love* (1993). That same year, he died of a drug overdose outside a club.

Corey Feldman is Teddy Duchamp. His most popular role was in *The Lost Boys* in 1987. He also appeared in *Dream a Little Dream* (1989). He disappeared from the screen for several years when he chose to stop performing. After settling some personal issues, he is now performing in films again.

Jerry O'Connell is Vern Tessio in *Stand By Me*. Although he waited until he graduated from college to work full-time, he has been fairly successful appearing in such films as *Jerry Maguire* (1996), *Scream 2* (1997) and *Mission to Mars* (2000).



Stand By Me is one of those films that people around the world can relate to. Viewers are drawn in by the story and the sense of nostalgia they receive from seeing boys experience the life they once enjoyed. Both viewers and critics agreed on this wonderful film.

Stand By Me was nominated for one Academy Award: Best Writing, Screenplay Based on Material from Another Medium for Raynold Gideon and Bruce A. Evans. It was also nominated for two Golden Globe Awards: Best Director - Motion Picture and Best Motion Picture - Drama for Rob Reiner.



Summary and Analysis

Stand By Me begins as viewers look across a country field where an old Hummer sits on the side of the road. We see from the headlines in the newspaper that Attorney Chris Chambers was stabbed in a restaurant. Two boys ride by on their bicycles, passing the Hummer with the writer inside. The writer begins to think and narrate:

"I was twelve going on thirteen the first time I saw a dead human being. It happened in the summer of 1959 - a long time ago, but only if you measure in terms of years. I was living in a small town in Oregon called Castle Rock; there were only twelve hundred and eighty-one people, but to me it was the whole world."

The audience then sees Gordie Lachance, a young boy, looking at magazines in a convenience store. He goes to a tree house and knocks on the door, and we see boys inside playing cards and smoking cigarettes. Gordie tells us that Teddy Duchamp is one of the boys who had little chance in life because his daddy was so mean. Chris Chambers was Gordie's best friend and the leader of the club. Outside Vern forgot the secret knock, but they let him in anyway. Vern has big news and asks them if they want to go see a dead body.

At the beginning of the year Vern buried a quart of pennies under the house, and he spent nine months trying to find the pennies after his mom threw away the map. Under the porch, Vern hears some older boys talking about how they found a dead kid, Ray, who was probably hit by a train. The boys had been driving a stolen car out to the train tracks, so they can't tell the police. They agree that Ray must have followed the tracks all the way out to where he got run over.

When Vern tells the boys, they decide that they want to find Ray's body so that they can be famous. Gordie creates a plan that gives them a day and a half of freedom so they can go looking. Gordie tries to be as excited as his friends, but he has had a rough summer. His older brother Dennis was killed in a Jeep accident four months before, and Gordie's existence was all but forgotten by his parents. Gordie's father wants to know why he can't have good friends like Dennis instead of thieves.

The boys set out around noon, and Gordie meets up with Chris first. Chris shows Gordie a gun he stole, and Gordie accidentally pulls the trigger. With the gunshot, the boys run. Chris swears that he didn't know the gun was loaded. Gordie is wearing his brother's hat, and an older guy steals it. Chris tries to get it back, but he's not strong enough to take on the older teenage boys.

Finally, all the boys meet, and they follow the railroad tracks to find the dead boy. They figure that they have to walk around twenty miles to get to the dead body. They are out in the middle of nowhere when they realize that no one brought any food on the trip. They count up their money and have \$2.37.



The train comes toward the boys, so they jump out of the train's way. Teddy stays put on the center of the tracks, though. Chris pulls Teddy off the tracks at the last moment before the train gets to them. Teddy agrees to forgive Chris, but he is still unhappy about not getting to dodge the train. Around the same time, the older boys, Charlie and Billy and their friends, are playing mailbox baseball as they drive along the road.

The younger boys climb the junkyard fence and try to avoid both the junkyard man and the dreaded dog, Chopper, who supposedly has been trained to attack specific body parts. Chris and Gordie race across the junkyard, and Chris wins. Then all the boys hang out and enjoy their time together. They feel that they know exactly who they are and where they are going. They will soon find out that they have much to learn.

In the convenience store, Gordie goes to buy food, and the owner tells him that he looks like his brother Dennis. Gordie remembers how the family dinner went before Dennis's big baseball game. Their father is focused on the game, and their mother wants to talk about girls. Dennis, on the other hand, compliments Gordie on the story he wrote and hopes that he will write more.

Gordie returns to the junkyard and discovers that everyone is gone. The junkyard man spots him, and Gordie runs as fast as possible. Gordie screams as he runs from Chopper, who turns out to be a sweet Lab. Gordie realizes for the first time that there is a difference between myth and reality. The junkyard man says yells at them and says Teddy's dad was crazy. Teddy threatens to kill the man. The others restrain him as best they can. The junkyard man threatens to call all their parents, and they drag Teddy away crying and screaming from his difficult life.

Gordie can't understand how Teddy could love his old man so much after he was almost killed by him as a child, while Gordie doesn't care about his dad. They all try to make Teddy feel better, but he is upset by the experience. Vern begins to sing until the others give him a bad look. Teddy apologizes for spoiling a good time, and they encourage him.

The afternoon is still young, but so much has happened during the day. Gordie feels like they have been gone from home forever. They begin to hurry so that they can get in some miles before dark. Billie, Charlie and a couple of the other older boys hang out and talk about girls and how to get laid. The radio says the police are expanding their search for the missing boy, but a couple of guys know that they are looking in the wrong direction. They have actually seen the body.

As the kids follow the railroad tracks, Gordie asks Chris whether he's weird. Chris tells him that everyone's weird. Chris realizes that Gordie will be in college courses while the others will be in auto courses. Chris tells Gordie that if he hangs with them, he's stupid and passing up a good opportunity. Gordie is tired of Chris trying to be his dad, but Chris tells him that if he were his dad, Gordie wouldn't be talking about stupid stuff like taking auto classes. Gordie can write good stories, and Chris wants to see him use the talent God gave him.



After hours of walking, the boys come to a huge bridge over the river. They hesitate as they wonder when the train will be coming. They are afraid that another train will come while they're trying to get across, but Teddy says that he'll be crossing now. Gordie feels the tracks before crossing, and they begin their journey. The space between the slats is wide, and they have to walk carefully so that they don't fall. Vern actually crawls on his knees because he is so scared. As the boys continue, Gordie feels the tracks again, and then he begins to hear a train. They begin to run across the bridge, and Vern gets scared and falls down. Vern and Gordie get off the bridge just in the nick of time. Teddy looks at the bright side, since at least now they know when the next train was coming. They continue on their journey after the terrifying experience.

That night, the boys cook over a campfire and enjoy a smoke afterwards. Chris and the others convince Gordie to tell them one of his stories. Gordie tells the story of a really fat kid who comes up with a great revenge idea. The audience then sees Gordie's story come to life. At a pie-eating contest, David Hogan is expected to do well. David becomes angry that everyone is making fun of him, and then the contest begins. David keeps eating, and the crowd begins to cheer for him. He doesn't care about winning. He just wants revenge, and before the contest began, he took a slug of castor oil and ate an egg. David begins to imagine that he is eating nasty stuff, and a sound comes from his stomach. Then David throws up all over the previous winner, and everyone else begins to throw up. As the smell gets to the crowd, everyone gets sick on each other. David, on the other hand, just sits back and enjoys the mess he's created. The boys love the story, but they want to know what else happened. They feel let down by the ending and help David come up with other options.

All night, the boys talk about the stuff that they think is important. Gordie tells the viewers that those things only seem important until you discover girls. They discuss things like favorite foods and what goofy really is. They begin to hear dogs howling, and Vern begins making promises to God. Teddy decides that it must be Ray's ghost and goes to find it, but then they all huddle together around the fire. Teddy decides to be the first guard, but Teddy is so loud that no one else can sleep.

During the night, Gordie begins to dream about his brother's funeral. He imagines his father telling him that he should have been the one to die. Chris is awake, and Gordie tells him that he didn't cry at the funeral but really misses Dennis. Chris tells Gordie to go back to sleep. Instead, Gordie goes to keep watch with Chris and asks him to go into the college courses too.

Chris realizes that everyone thinks he's just a low-life kid because of his family, and he tells Gordie how much that frustrates him. Even though Chris did take the milk money once at school, he admits that he tried to give it back. An old lady stole it back from him. Chris couldn't tell the story because no one would believe it. Chris feels stupid for trying to give it back, and he's hurt that a teacher would treat him that way. He wants to go away where no one knows him so that he can be the person he wants to be.

As Gordie waits for the others alone on the train tracks, he sees a beautiful deer. The train wakes up everyone else, but Gordie decides to not tell them about the deer. Until



he tells this story, he's never told anyone about it. They decide to cut across a big field and some woods so that they can find Ray's body sooner. Charlie and Billy finally tell the other guys about Ray's dead body, and they take fishing gear so that they can have a cover story.

The younger boys come to a river, and they try to cross. They all get soaked and play in the water before going ahead to find Ray's body. Gordie is getting out of the water when they realize that the water was full of leaches. They jump out and begin peeling leaches off their bodies. Gordie has a leach down his underwear, and he begins to cry as he pulls it off. When Gordie sees blood, he passes out. Chris and Vern want to go back, but Teddy taunts them. Gordie hears them fighting and yells at them to stop. He tells the others that he for one is still going ahead. Gordie feels that he needs to see the body and in that way also come to terms with his brother's death.

The older boys race some other teenagers as they try to get to Ray's body first, but the kids finally reach the road and find the corpse. After staring at the body, they prepare to build a stretcher. Gordie sits quietly on a log, though, and starts talking to the boy and asking why he had to die. He's really asking why his brother had to die, and he tells Chris that it should have been him. Even Gordie's dad told him that he wasn't any good. Gordie feels that he hates his father, but Chris tells him that his dad doesn't even know him. Gordie weeps while Chris puts his arm around him.

The older boys finally arrive and threaten the young boys. Chris tells his older brother that they have dibs. The older boys tell them either to leave quietly or get beaten up. Teddy taunts the teenagers, and Chris tells the guys to go away. One of them pulls a knife and goes toward Chris. Suddenly a gunshot sounds as Gordie pulls a gun on the teenagers. Finally, they leave, and the boys look at Ray's body. They are saddened by what they see.

Gordie decides that no one should take credit for the find. They make an anonymous phone call after they cover the body and return home. They get home early Sunday morning, but they feel that after their day-and-a-half trek the town seems different and smaller. They stop as they enter town and tell each other that they'll see the others in junior high. Vern walks home first and stops to pick up a penny for good luck. He is followed by Teddy.

Chris and Gordie walk down the street together. Gordie tells the audience that the boys later saw less and less of Vern and Teddy. At the tree house, Chris asks Gordie whether he will ever be able to get out of town. Gordie tells him that he can do anything he wants, but Chris doesn't completely believe him. Then, Chris says goodbye.

Gordie, as the narrator, tells the viewers that Chris went into the college classes, worked hard and passed. He then went on to college and became a lawyer. A week before Gordie returns, Chris was breaking up a fight at a fast food restaurant when he was stabbed in the throat and died almost instantly.



On a computer screen, the audience sees that Gordie is typing about how he will miss Chris forever, even though he hadn't seen him in over ten years. Gordie's son and his friend come into his office and ask if he's ready to go. They are tired of waiting, but his son explains that his dad's just weird like that when he writes. Then Gordie types, "I never had any friends later on like the ones I had when I was twelve. Jesus, did anyone?" Then, Gordie walks out of the office, and the viewers see him go meet the boys outside.



Characters

Gordie Lachance, played by Wil Wheaton

Description

Gordie Lachance is first seen at the beginning of the film when he has grown up and has become a writer. His good friend Chris from his childhood was killed recently, and Gordie decides to write down the story of the adventure that in some sense defined the rest of their lives.

Gordie goes along with the other boys' plans to find a dead body, and he learns a lot on the way. He discovers that no one should be taken at face value, as he tries to convince Chris that he is just as good as everyone else. He also finds that there are some things about which you simply don't speak, such as the experience with the deer by the railroad tracks.

Gordie is generally considered the most responsible of the boys. He is quieter, and when he says something, everyone should usually listen. He also has a talent for telling stories that he uses in his adulthood as a writer. Gordie's talents entertain the boys on their journey and bring him success in the future.

Analysis

As a boy, Gordie is rather quiet and timid. He doesn't want to offend people, so he often keeps his mouth shut. Gordie gives good advice most of the time and is the most levelheaded of the boys. He has a good attitude in everything and shows bravery most of the time. Gordie's confidence in himself and other people helps viewers to remember that they should always believe the best of everyone. Gordie proves himself to be brave and kind as they have their great adventure. When Gordie has grown up, he realizes that this day and a half adventure changed him forever. Even though it was less than a whole weekend, he left as a boy and returned as a man, even at such a young age.

Chris Chambers, played by River Phoenix

Description

Chris Chambers is known to be the bad kid in town. He is always getting into trouble, and even if he's not in trouble, he's getting blamed for things he didn't do. Chris finally has decided that if he's going to be blamed for doing things, he might as well actually be doing them. Chris has an older brother who actually is a troublemaker and has helped give Chris this bad reputation. They don't get along at all, and Chris is always trying to be as tough as his brother.



During the boys' trip, Chris learns the value of a life. With Gordie's help, he realizes that he can be anything he wants to be. Eventually, he grows up and becomes a very successful lawyer. He is killed right before the movie starts, though, when he is stabbed while trying to break up a fight.

Analysis

Chris has a life worth living in large part because of this one experience. He learns what it truly means to be a man. He has had few good examples in his life, and he doesn't understand how to act like a real man. During this adventure, he learns. Chris also becomes convinced, thanks to Gordie, that he can succeed in life. He has been conditioned to believe that he can only take vocational classes, since his teachers don't believe he's smart enough to take college-prep classes. The audience learns later that Chris has succeeded in college classes and became a lawyer. By believing in himself, he is able to accomplish what he first believed to be impossible.

Teddy Duchamp, played by Corey Feldman

Description

Teddy seems a little bit crazy at first. He has a rough life. He is mistreated at home and mocked at school. Teddy doesn't believe that his life is worth living. At one point during their trip, he even tries to get run over by a train before Chris saves him. He finally realizes that his life is worth more than he believes.

Analysis

Teddy adds both comic relief and seriousness to the film. He is kind of crazy and unusual, but he's always saying something funny. Also, he learns about himself and true friendship while they travel.

Vern Tessio, played by Jerry O'Connell

Description

Vern Tessio is part of the group the boys have created over the summer. He is a little bit clueless and always forgetting the password to their tree house. While he is under the porch one day, he hears his brother and Charlie discussing the body of a dead boy that they found. When he tells his friends, they decide to find the body so that they can get the reward money.



Analysis

Vern is the one clueless member of the group of friends. He's a nice innocent kid who is often beat up by his older brother Billy. Vern learns the power of friendship as he and the other boys set out on their great adventure. He is able to let go of his self-consciousness and just enjoy the time with friends.

Billy Tessio, played by Casey Siemaszko

Description

Billy is Vern's older brother and is the reason that Gordie and the others find out where the dead body is located.

Analysis

Billy cares mostly about girls and cars, but he is also excited about finding the body. He is extremely cruel to his younger brother during the film but finally gets a taste of his own medicine when the younger boys force him and his friends away from where the body is located.

Charlie Hogan, played by Gary Riley

Description

Charlie is one of the older boys who find the body of the dead boy. He and Billy discuss their find at Vern's house as Vern eavesdrops. Charlie and Billy later beat up the other boys and try to beat them to the body.

Analysis

Charlie is a bully who doesn't care about anything except fast cars and girls. The only really important thing about him is that he and Billy found the dead body.

Ace Merrill, played by Kiefer Sutherland

Description

Ace Merrill is another of Billy's cronies who cares only for cars and girls.



Analysis

Chris is constantly challenging Ace and the other boys. Ace takes it worse than everyone else and threatens to kill Chris at one point.

Writer, played by Richard Dreyfuss

Description

The writer is Gordie Lachance later in life. Gordie is finally telling the story of his childhood adventure after the death of his closest friend. They all grow up and create the lives they always dreamed of, and this adventure was one of their first forays into the real world.

Analysis

The writer is looking back on the most important memory from his childhood. He realizes the importance of the adventure and wants to share it with others after all these years.



Themes

Boyhood Friendships

The Writer believes that the friendships of boyhood are by far the most lasting and the most powerful of all the friendships a person can have throughout life. He has a soft spot in his heart for his memories of these friends, and this one experience in many ways defined who he would become as an adult.

The adventures and playfulness of boyhood friendships can help define a person. Chris at first believed himself to be stupid and unable to go into college classes, but the audience learns that after his conversations with Gordie, he decides to succeed in school as well and eventually becomes a lawyer.

Boyhood friendships are also depicted as temporary but yet eternal. These boys only stayed friends for a few years and only had such a great experience for less than two days, but their experience becomes immortal in their memories. This time of transformation makes everything a lasting gift even when the experience can be measured in minutes.

Enjoying the Journey

The boys are primarily interested in enjoying the journey along the way. They have a grand sense of adventure as they go on their quest to find the body, but most of the really exciting events for them happen as they travel. They start out following the railroad tracks out of town so that they can find the corpse.

Although these boys may be ignorant about many things in life, they certainly know that the journey is the most important part of any trip. They walk along railroad tracks, save Teddy from himself and journey through a scary swamp, but they love every minute of it. They never flinch when bad things happen, although Gordie does pass out because of a leach down his pants. The boys refuse to complain and do not turn back.

Viewers realize that the boys truly enjoy the journey because many years later Gordie still sees this as the defining moment of his life and the lives of the other boys. He realizes that these events live not only in his memory but also in the memories of the others. They are never the same after their experience, and they treasure the memories forever.

Having What It Takes

Many men say that their greatest fear is that they don't have what it takes to be successful in their lives as men, as husbands and as fathers. These boys already feel this fear, and it plagues them both in school and out. They have had few adventures in



the past, and they want to prove something both to themselves and to the adults who know them and already have them stereotyped.

As the boys travel, they show that they have everything they need to do well in life. Although Teddy has some problems, the others work together to try to save him from himself and the demons of his past. Gordie encourages Chris to be more ambitious and begin living his life with the idea that he can succeed in anything he wants, no matter what other people think about him.

When the adult Gordie narrates what happened to the boys, film viewers are not in the least surprised. Although Teddy and Vern weren't as successful, Gordie and Chris went out into the world and made all their dreams come true. They refused to take no for an answer and demanded what they wanted out of life.

Style and Cinematography

Stand By Me brings back the entire adult longing for childhood. It is filmed in such a way that it almost seems unreal, while at the same time each viewer recognizes that at one point or another they have had a similar experience. Viewers leave theatres or couches with a sense of longing for an earlier, better time when all was right with the world. Nostalgia helps bring viewers and critics into Gordie's world. Most children have similar experiences, and *Stand By Me* draws all those feelings from childhood into one film. People love this film because it allows them to experience childhood again.

The casting of the story is also exceptional. The four boys are the perfect combination. They are different enough that they shouldn't be friends, but they are all alike in that they long to be grown up and mature. The young actors portray their characters with poignancy and brilliance.

Stand By Me also has stunning cinematography. The filmmakers take full advantage of the beautiful countryside where it is filmed. Long shots and pans help viewers to see the intense connection to nature that the boys experience. By the time the film ends, viewers wonder whether they or the boys are the ones who are really experiencing the time, place and events.



Motifs

Journey

Gordie and his friends take the journey of their young lives in *Stand By Me*. They experience a physical journey through the woods, but they also have an emotional and mental journey that will change their lives and that keeps the memory alive with Gordie years later.

The first journey the boys take is the physical journey. They travel from their homes in a small town down by the railroad tracks to look for the body of a young boy who has been murdered. They want to receive fame and acknowledgement for the good deed. As they travel, they experience some difficulties and many growing experiences that change who they will become as men.

Secondly, the boys take a mental and emotional journey. They are tested to their limits as they struggle together to safely make their journey. They are threatened by trains, leeches and the older boys. They also change mentally and emotionally, especially Chris and Gordie. Gordie begins to become a man, and Chris gains self-confidence that will help him improve his lot in life.

Childhood

Childhood is a time filled with wonder and excitement. Children are always coming up with new games and adventures. Gordie and his friends are no different, but instead of coming up with an imaginary adventure, they pursue a real-life adventure that falls right into their backyard.

Only during childhood could such an adventure seem fun rather than scary. Most adults tend to be more scared for their safety and livelihood than any child. These boys don't realize the dangers that could lie before them, so they are able to simply enjoy themselves as they travel.

Childhood's mysterious callings also bring nostalgia into the hearts of viewers. They realize that there was once a time when they had these same feelings and desires, and they wish that those days weren't long gone. Viewers easily relate to the story because in some small way, it is also the story of their lives.

The Writer

The writer gives a reason for a story to be told. Stories don't simply appear; someone must be telling them. By allowing an adult Gordie to tell the story, the film gives a certain realism to the plot. Gordie tells his memories of childhood and is able to narrate them as the story continues.

One question that must be considered when viewing Gordie's story is whether the writer is telling the truth or whether the story has been tinted by nostalgia. In *Stand By Me*, the answer is probably both. Gordie is telling the truth for himself, but if any of the other boys told their stories, we would probably see things in an entirely new way. Also Gordie probably remembers the events as he wants them to be rather than exactly how they were. For the most part, though, viewers are able to enjoy the writer's point of view. It gives a first person look into the events while adding enough nostalgia to draw out our nostalgia for our own childhoods and childhood friends.

Symbols

Railroad Tracks

As the boys go to find the dead body, they follow the railroad tracks out of town. Just as the tracks stretch on for miles in front of them, the boys' lives also stretch out in years before them. They follow the tracks as they will follow their lives in order to find adventure and purpose.

The audience also sees pain through the railroad tracks. Teddy is abused and feels unloved and unwanted. When he sees the train coming toward them, he is ready to end everything. He jumps in front and waits for the train to put him out of his misery. At that moment, the tracks begin to symbolize true friendship as Chris jumps in front of train and pulls Teddy out of the way just in the nick of time. Chris and the others care for their friend even when he doesn't care for himself.

The Tree House

When the viewers first meet the four boys, they are gathered in their tree house. They have spent the summer so far enjoying playing cards and smoking there. Over the years, they have gotten to know each other well, but now, at the ripe old age of twelve, they are in danger of growing up all too quickly. The tree house is symbolic of innocent childhood friendships that help make each of us into who we will become. These boys have been having clean innocent fun over the years, but they are about to be faced with the gritty real world of decisions and danger.

From the safety of the tree house, the boys set out on their first adult adventure and try to stay brave in the process. None of them knows quite what they are going to do with their lives, and on this trip, they begin to figure it out. A day and a half after leaving their tree house, they will return changed men.

The Deer

While the boys are camping in the woods, Gordie gets up earlier than the rest and sits out beside the train tracks. He just sits and thinks about life and his friends. While he's resting, a deer comes out and stands beside him. He remains really quiet and watches as the deer walks slowly away. Gordie never tells his friends.

Gordie, the storyteller, finally has something that he doesn't want to share with others. He decides to remain silent on this point and basks in the joy of the moment with the deer. After the earlier terrible events on the train track when Teddy almost commits suicide, the deer offers a calmer view of life in the forest near the tracks.



Sometimes in life, there are simply things that can't be discussed. Gordie realizes that his experience with the deer was in some way magical for him. He sees the natural world and man-made world of the tracks coming together for a brief moment. In his heart, he knows this was an important moment for him, but at the same time, it's one that would lose all its magic if mentioned to another.



Essay Questions

Who is included in the group of friends? What draws these boys together?

How do the boys find out where the dead body is found?

Why do the boys plan to find the body?

How do the older boys treat the younger ones?

Why are the boys scared at the junkyard?

Describe the adventure in the swamp.

Why does Chris believe that he can't go into college classes?

What is Gordie's talent?

Why don't the boys report the body to the police?

What event makes the adult Gordie write down this story? Why?