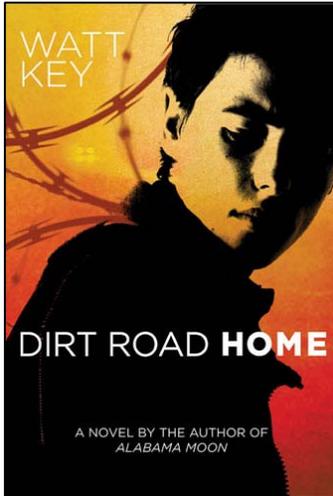


**Farrar Straus Giroux BYR
DISCUSSION GUIDE**



DIRT ROAD HOME
By Watt Key

Reading Level
Grades 5 to 9

About the Novel

After his recapture at the end of *Alabama Moon*, gutsy fourteen-year-old Hal Mitchell is sentenced to live at Hellenweiler, an institution that is more like a jail than the boys' home it's supposed to be. Hal could walk out in just a few months if he keeps out of trouble. But in a place like Hellenweiler, the more he tries to avoid the gangs and their violence, the more Hal's fellow inmates try to fight him.

Discussion Questions

1. Do you think Hal deserves to be at the Hellenweiler Boys' Home? Why?
2. Do you agree with Hal's choice to stay unassociated with the Ministers and the Hounds? Is this a good decision? Why? If you were Hal, would you make the same decision?
3. Who do you think is a better leader, Paco or Jack? Who do you think is stronger? Why?
4. Why do both gangs leave Caboose alone? Why does Caboose never say anything?
5. How did Hal's experiences with Moon Blake change Hal's personality?
6. Why do the boys at Hellenweiler lie about how they got there?
7. Why did Paco take a beating from Jack? What was he trying to achieve?

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8. How was Paco different before he came to Hellenweiler? Why did he change?
9. Have you ever gotten in trouble with the law? Did the experience change you?
10. Did you like the ending of the book? Do you think that Caboose will still seek revenge from the guards?

About the Author

This is Watt Key's second novel. His first novel, *Alabama Moon*, is also a major motion picture starring Clint Howard and John Goodman. Watt Key lives in southern Alabama with his family.

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