



Two Truths and a Lie Reading Guide

1. In what way does the animal communication in the story parallel the book's overall themes of human communication and honesty?
2. The main character, Dair, is an actress. How does her career of choice help feed her lying—both to herself and others?
3. Examine all of the characters who are keeping secrets or telling lies of varying degrees. Look at Dair, Peyton, Marielle, Matt, Mr. Lively, Cassie, R.B., and even minor characters like Malcolm, Gayle, and Andy. How are the motivations different? How successful is each and why? In what ways does their withholding affect their communication with others and with themselves?
4. Many scenes in the book show human characters communicating through language, but we discover that what the characters say is not an accurate reflection of what they are thinking or feeling. Examine such scenes as Dair and Cassie in Burnett Woods, Peyton and R.B. in the truck, Dair “admitting” to Peyton that she dumped the vodka, Andy and Dair at the zoo, Gayle confronting Dair about the dress, etc. In what other ways, besides speech, is the true exchange communicated? In what other ways, besides speech, is the true exchange obscured?
5. Our own bodies communicate with us, through dreams, memories, illness—frequently stress or sorrow causes us illness, depression can be brought on by memories, memories can be triggered by our sensory perceptions, etc. What are Dair's messages from her own body regarding her “lie” about her twin? How does she respond to the messages?
6. What affect does Peyton's belief in reincarnation have on the story? According to his belief, one of his "lessons" is to learn to trust his intuition. What does his intuition tell him about Sylvan? Is there any connection between his belief that he'd known Dair before and the truth about her twin?
7. Is there any suggestion of reincarnation in any other characters—human and non-human?
8. There is a recurring motif of “practice”—whether it's practicing aikido, a play, dance steps, or the Twelve Steps. How does the idea of practice relate to Peyton's belief in reincarnation?
9. Four characters struggle with issues of alcoholism and/or addiction. In what ways do they fit and not fit the stereotypes of alcoholics and drug addicts?
10. How does the issue of addiction relate to the overall theme of communication?
11. How does the setting of the zoo relate to the addiction issues in the book? How does it relate to the theme of communication?
12. Do you believe Dair has actually acknowledged that she has a drinking problem? How successful do you think she'll be in recovery?

13. What affect does appearance have on the truth? How do details like Craig's dress cloud the truth and the search for an explanation?
14. How do you feel about the animal communication and Cassie's description of how it works? Do you feel such communication is possible, or more likely based on intuition and observation?