Scoot and Discuss Questions

1. **Willie threatened Judge Irwin in Chapter 1. Why has it taken so long for the threat to return to Jack's narrative?**

(5 min)

Some students may simply think it's Warren's choices about storytelling, that he's choosing to use and move through time in an unconventional way; in this case, prod them to consider what narrative impact this "unconventional" use of time has. They should also note that Jack considers Irwin to be a father figure much more secure than any of his other possible choices, and that it may, in fact, be painful for Jack to conduct this research. That is to say, he may be avoiding the subject as a narrator. Students might recall that in Chapter 1, Jack, looking back on the past, said that Judge Irwin is now dead—could that be associated with this?

1. **How does Willie's assertion that good must be made out of badness (because there is no other choice) relate to his other views and the broader philosophical bent of the novel thus far?**

(5 min)

Students should note that this view connects to Willie's frequent assertion that his corrupt and abusive practices serve the greater good, which many of his constituents agree with. Some points to consider might be: why do some people make good out of badness and others not? Does Willie's assertion mean that goodness can't ever be replicated or reproduced, but badness can? Can students think of examples either in their own lives or in other social history or literature where "the end justifies the means"? Do they think that Willie's argument makes sense? Why or why not?

1. **Why does Adam ultimately make the choice to lead the hospital?**

(5 min)

Jack's evidence has shown him that no one is free from corruption, and as such, it has thrown his perception of his own childhood and morality into disarray. Adam still dislikes Willie—he still considers him corrupt and cruel—but now, Adam can't believe that his own father was insulated from these practices. If he believes his father was "good," he now has evidence that his father built that good on badness, just as Willie says. If Adam wants to do good, he now thinks, he has to consider his choices beyond the day-to-day. Students should consider this in conjunction with the last question—do they think Adam made the right choice?

1. **How does the text suggest Jack feels about the evidence he's found on Judge Irwin?**

(5 min)

Jack certainly doesn't express emotion openly, even in his internal narrative, but he's mentioned several times his childhood memories of Judge Irwin as a caring father figure. However, he conducts the research into Irwin's past dispassionately, and he doesn't seem openly surprised or disturbed by what he finds. However, students should note that Jack originally asserted to Willie that they wouldn't be able to find anything on the Judge. Jack might feel a mix of professional accomplishment at his own research skills, vindication for his cynicism, and disappointment in the Judge.

1. **Does Anne like Willie? Does she respect him? Cite evidence from the text.**

(5 min)

Anne seems to feel some sense of attraction towards Willie—if she didn't, she wouldn't have started an affair with him. However, she's continued to speak of him and his policies somewhat contemptuously, and some of her words indicate that she might not respect him. Nonetheless, she supports Willie's hospital project and wants Adam involved; she has no problem getting Willie's support for the Children's Home. Students should consider whether Anne is making choices as shrewd as Willie's in having an affair with him, or whether Willie is manipulating Anne as he manipulates so many others.