

Study Guide: *The Secret Sign of the Lizard People*

The Secret Sign of the Lizard People is a satirical novel suitable for a young or mature adult audience that blends science-fiction and murder-mystery with a twist of political humour. This study guide provides teachers and discussion groups with a variety of ideas and questions designed to provoke independent thought and promote a better understanding of the world that we inhabit.

1. What does '*in risu veritas*' mean? How does it apply to *The Secret Sign of the Lizard People*?
2. Why do the two detectives no longer believe in God?
3. What do they believe in? Is there a difference between believing and knowing? Explain.
4. Name the melded persona of the two detectives and use three sentences to discuss why such a descriptive device might be used in a book.
5. Is there a purpose for satire? If so, then what is the purpose?
6. To what religion does the Reverend Abigail Brown belong? List some of the things that make her angry.
7. What is the name of the K9 assistant interrogator? Examine the consequences of owning a lie-sniffing dog.
8. Name some of the best and the worst aspects of using the internet.
9. How many types of special agent does Leafy bring to the picnic table? What is the difference between a protagonist and an antagonist? Which of those fits Beefy? Which of those fits Leafy?
10. What character is best described as messianic and what common North American animal is he named for? What is the acronym for his organization? What is the difference between an acronym and an initialism?
11. Define the word metaphor. Give two examples.
12. To what language does the phrase *Deus ex machina* belong? What does it mean and what is the origin of the phrase?
13. What make and model of car do the detectives drive? What make and model of car overtakes them on the journey to the Adelanto Detention Center? What make and model of car does Armand Hammer drive?
14. What does it mean to be 'choreographically challenged'? Which character is afflicted with this disability? On a scale of one to ten, how serious would such a disability be to you?
15. Analyze Manstein's antipathy to Leafy and establish the root cause. Is it appropriate to use expletives in a work of literature? Do expletives have a role as a communication tool in general conversation? If so, explain that role.
16. Briefly describe Nor Westerly, both physically and psychologically, and ponder the reasons why it was necessary to include a character like her in a sci-fi murder-mystery satire.
17. In your own words, talk about what democracy means to you. And what is a plutocracy?

18. Why do you think it is that some people are homeless at the bottom of the social scale and some people are rich? Is this the default setting of human nature? Can human nature be changed? Does it need to be changed?
19. Who or what is the JCG? Should the JCG have an assigned gender? Should angels have an assigned gender? What is the meaning of the word 'smite'? Should human attributes be applied to divine beings? Should divine attributes be applied to mortal beings?
20. Which American political party does Beefy support? What are the basic principles of that party?
21. Do you believe in extra-terrestrial life-forms? Explain the basis for your belief or your disbelief.
22. How does a person know what is true and what is not true? Describe the devices and methods that could be used to verify that something is either true or false.
23. Which character is erroneously described as 'you go first with an omelette'? To what branch of science does he belong and what is his nationality?
24. Why are the Lizard People promoting global warming? What is so valuable to them on planet Earth?
25. In the last chapter, which famous poem does Leafy and Beefy badly misquote and which twentieth-century Welsh bard penned the original?
26. Who do you think —from the author's perspective — are the *real* Lizard People? Discuss.

INCENTIVES!

An iTunes electronic copy of *The Secret Sign of the Lizard People* will be presented for the best answers to the questions in this study-guide.

A signed, inscribed copy of *The Secret Sign of the Lizard People* will be presented for the best videoed performance of the secret sign.

The winning videos will be uploaded to YouTube to be entered into a future contest for the ultimate rendition of the secret sign and a chance to win more stuff — but perhaps more importantly, the chance to gain the exclusive bragging rights associated with such a momentous choreographic achievement!

Good luck!

KEB