

**68 Knots**  
**Discussion Questions**  
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*Plot*

- Choose one of the teen characters. How did that character end up on McKinley's Leadership Cruise? What did he or she hope to gain from the experience? Were those expectations met?
- What message did Bonnie have for the teens on the ship?
- How did the drills (sailor overboard, swamped dinghy) help the teens emotionally as well as physically?
- Why did Marietta decide to betray her shipmates?
- At which points during the summer did the danger of the voyage become most apparent?
- Why do the teens want the *Dreadnought* to look sharp and shipshape when they hand it over to the Coast Guard?

*Characters*

- What was the biggest change that Arthur went through during his time on the ship?
- Which character changed the least? Why?
- Why did McKinley choose to end his life?
- Why did Bonnie decide to change her life so radically?
- What role did Smudge play in the novel?
- What are some of the reasons that Arthur decides to attend the College of the Atlantic instead of Dartmouth?
- What prompts Logan to stop drinking?
- How does Joy's approach to religion change during the summer?

*Setting*

- In what ways is the *Dreadnought* a character in the novel? How does the *Dreadnought* compare and contrast with the *Icarus*?

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- How does the ship define and limit the teens' world?
- What role does the ocean play in the novel's action and development?
- How do the *Dreadnought* teens use the setting to their advantage?

*Writing*

- How does the rescue of Ibis (the whale caught in the net) foreshadow the crisis in the cave?
- At what point does the action in the novel begin to convey a sense of ending?
- Why does the novel begin with McKinley's death and then go back to fill in the events that came before?

*Reflections*

- Did you find the ending satisfying? Why or why not?
- The teens decided to stay on board the *Dreadnought* after McKinley killed himself. If you were on board then, how would you have voted? Why?
- What is the scariest situation you have ever been in? How did you handle it?
- If you found yourself totally free for a summer—what would you do?