

Southern Son: The Saga of Doc Holliday - Inheritance Book One
Reading Group Questions

- 1) The title of the book is *Inheritance*. John Henry's inheritance was both literal and figurative. What were the literal elements of his inheritance? What were the figurative or symbolic elements of his inheritance? What kinds of inheritances affect our lives?
- 2) John Henry believes in heroes. Who are the heroes in his life? What are the elements of heroism that he respects?
- 3) John Henry was raised to be a Southern gentleman. What were the character qualities of a Southern gentleman? What parts of his personality depict this stereotype?
- 4) Henry Holiday instructs John Henry on his responsibility toward women. What was the viewpoint on women during the Civil War? During Reconstruction? How did the women in John Henry's life influence him?
- 5) John Henry is surrounded by cousins and other family members, but is raised as an only child. How did his position in the family structure influence his life? How has position in your own family influenced your life?
- 6) What is the symbolism of the gold Irish ring, and how does it depict the relationship between John Henry and Mattie?
- 7) What influence did religion have on John Henry's life? On Mattie's life? Did all Christian denominations have the same beliefs? How does your faith influence your choices in life?
- 8) What do the Valdosta vigilantes hope to accomplish? In what way do their actions relate to modern-day political terrorists? What is the draw for a young man like John Henry to a group with violent intent?
- 9) If the Civil War had not changed the culture of the South, what might John Henry's future have been? As the grandson of a plantation owner what future might he had looked forward to? What influenced him to enter a professional career?
- 10) John Henry spends two years in dental school in Philadelphia. How does his experience in the City alter his view of life at home in Georgia?
- 11) Why is John Henry wary of becoming friends with the dental student named Jamison? What incidents helped to forge their friendship? How does their friendship influence John Henry's life?
- 12) John Henry has a relationship in St. Louis with an actress named Kate Fisher. What was the attitude of his time toward people of the theater? Would Kate have been considered a suitable companion for a young man of his station?
- 13) What is John Henry's changing view of his father? What incidents can you give to support his point of view? How might the same incidents be viewed by Henry Holliday?

- 14) Why does Mattie let John Henry kiss her as they stand together in the rain? What does she mean when she says she was "just wondering?" What might the rain itself symbolize?
- 15) Sarah Fitzgerald calls the Fayetteville Cemetery "Tara." What does she mean? How might the name Tara in *Gone With the Wind* be related to the "Tara" in *Inheritance*?
- 16) What was your opinion of Rachel Martin when she was first introduced in the book? Did your opinion of her change through the book? How does John Henry's opinion of her change?
- 17) Mattie Holiday is torn between her faith and her feelings. Do you see her as a strong character or a weak character because of this? Have you had times when you had to make hard choices between two things that you wanted?
- 18) John Henry lived in a changing world. In what ways did he change with the times? In what ways did he not adapt? How do societal changes affect your own standards?
- 19) John Henry was kin to author Margaret Mitchell, and many of her characters are his relatives. Which of the characters in *Inheritance* reminded you of characters in the novel *Gone With the Wind*?