Books by Chris Crutcher A Selected Bibliography



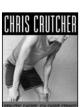
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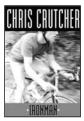
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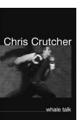
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★ "A masterpiece."—School Library Journal (starred review)

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- ALA Top 10 Best Book for Young Adults

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- · Book Sense Pick
- New York Public Library Books for the Teen Age
- Texas Library Association Tayshas High School Reading List



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This guide was prepared by Emily Linsay, teacher at the Bank Street School for Children. New York, NY.

Reading Group Guide

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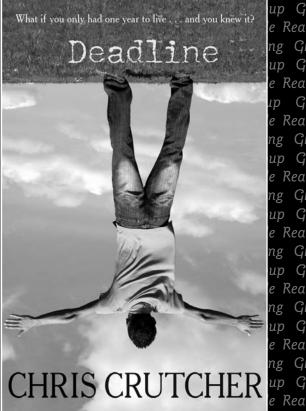
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Deadline

By Chris Crutcher

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"I have made a career out of creating characters who fight school authority and chomp at the bit to get out into the 'real' world to live their lives, mostly because that's the kind of teenager I was. The premise of Deadline forced me to go against my own grain with a character who is determined to find all that is valuable in that time. I believe this is a story about redemption: how, with the best intentions, it's sometimes found and sometimes not. It's a story about the immense power of fragile human connections. And it's also pretty funny."—Chris Crutcher

About the Book

Eighteen-year-old Ben Wolf finds out he has leukemia just before beginning his last year of high school. He doesn't like the diagnosis, but it feels oddly right to him—he never really saw a long future for himself, anyway. Instead of going into treatment to slightly delay the inevitable end, Ben decides to pack a whole life into his last year. He doesn't reveal his condition to his parents; his brother, Cody; or his stunning crush, Dallas Suzuki. But events lead Ben far from his plan to live normally. On his way to death, Ben learns about life, relationships, and the truth.

Discussion Prompts

- What do you think about Ben's decision to keep his diagnosis from family and friends? Would you want a friend or a family member to tell you if he or she was given Ben's diagnosis? What do you think you would have done if you were in Ben's position? Explain.
- 2. What do you think people fear about death? Why is death difficult to talk about? Should it be?
- 3. Compare and contrast the different deaths in this novel: Ben's, Sooner's, Ellen Marker's, Becky Sanders's, and Rudy McCoy's. Is one more tragic than the others?
- **4.** What does this story have to say about secrets? About the truth?

- 5. Who do you think Hey-Soos is? What does Hey-Soos do for Ben?
- **6.** Why does Ben decide to continue helping Rudy McCoy even after he learns about Rudy's past? Do you agree with Ben about Rudy? Explain.
- 7. Ben starts a campaign to name a street in his town after Malcolm X. Do you agree that this street name would be appropriate in an almost-exclusively white town? Explain. Who would you like to see a street named after in your town, and why? What barriers might stand in the way of making this happen?
- **8.** Sylvia Longley expresses her opinion that burning books should be okay since it's okay to burn the American flag. What do you think about burning, or banning, books? What do you think about burning the American flag?
- 9. Ben shouldn't have been as good a runner as he was because of his height, and he shouldn't have been as good a football player as he was because of his size. What do you believe makes a good athlete?
- Running helps Ben calm down when he's overwhelmed. What helps you?
- 11. Ben has "Too Old to Die Young," sung by Ann Savoy and Linda Ronstadt, on his playlist for loss. What other music might Ben have on this iPod playlist?
- 12. What's your approach to life? If you had to summarize a personal motto for yourself, what would it be? Do you think it would be different if you had a deadline? Explain. What is a person's legacy? What is Ben's? What do you hope that yours will be?
- 13. If you had to write a list of things you wanted to do or learn before you die, what would be on your list?
- **14.** Which character in this book do you think you would get along with best? Why?



About the Author

Chris Crutcher grew up in Cascade, Idaho, and now lives in Spokane, Washington. He is the critically acclaimed author of nine novels and a collection of short stories for teenagers, all chosen as ALA Best Books. In 2000, he received the American Library Association's Margaret A. Edwards Award, honoring his lifetime contribution in writing for teens. Drawing on his experience as an athlete, teacher, family therapist, and child protection specialist, he unflinchingly writes about real and often-ignored issues that face teenagers today.

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