

Questions for readers

- *Zachary: A Seagoing Cowboy* opens with Zachary taking in the details of the *SS Contest* for the first time. What details about his home life does he include that provide context for the size of a cargo ship? How do these references to proportion affect you as a reader? Do they make you feel small, large, out of place?
- Zachary faces many choices throughout the telling of this story. How do you feel about the choices he makes? Would yours have been the same or different? Why or why not?
- What did you think of Zachary's questioning of joining the military? Would you have been *willing* to join the Coast Guard?
- The story moves back and forth in time. When looking at scenes from the past, what do you think guided the author in deciding what scenes from the past to include? Do you find yourself having questions about Zachary's past that are not addressed? Explain.
- Zachary is faced with many challenges on his journey, but he also must learn to deal with personalities he has never experienced before. How is Zachary's understanding of himself challenged by these relationships? Ultimately, would you say he is successful or unsuccessful at integrating into the crew's culture?
- What elements of the crew's culture would you say are the most foreign to Zachary? What in his upbringing prepared him for dealing with a variety of personalities?
- What would have been the most inconvenient/unpleasant thing about being on the *S.S. Contest* charged with the care of all those goats? Would you be willing to deliver a baby goat?
- How do you feel about Zachary's relationship with his parents? Describe passages in the book that support your opinions.
- How would you have handled the prank targeting Zachary's bike? What statement about racism do you think the book is trying to make?
- What are your favorite parts of the story? Why?
- Do you think of Zachary as a hero? How did you come to this conclusion?
- Aside from Zachary, which characters in the story do you find most intriguing? Why?