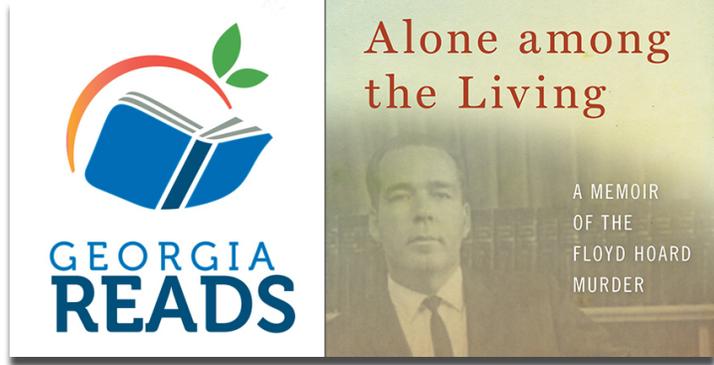


# Readers Guide

## *Alone among the Living: A Memoir of the Floyd Hoard Murder*

By G. Richard Hoard



- What are the strengths and the limitations of Hoard's use of first-person narrative in writing about such an infamous and personal event?
- How does the author's memoir contribute to the history of the murder? How would your experience as a reader be different if the story were told from the perspective of a distant bystander or objective reporter?
- How do the scenes depicting T. C. Morrison and high school football players contribute to the book's theme of standing alone among and against others?
- What does the author discover about himself and the nature of evil as he compares his treatment of T. C. with how conspirators treated his father?
- How did the murder of Hoard's father immediately change the inner life of the author as a young boy?
- What is the significance of Dickey's "catch" at the softball game the week before his father's death? How does this "catch" in his father's presence motivate his behavior throughout his next year of school?
- At Dickey's lowest point, he contemplates ending his life with his father's gun. What forces, emotions, or thoughts lead him to that low moment and what forces lead him to put the gun away?
- After the murder, investigators found a letter written by Floyd Hoard describing a young man's death. Do you believe that Floyd Hoard was predicting his own murder or describing what inevitably happens whenever people turn their heads and ignore criminal activity?
- Who are the Dixie Mafia? What did you know about them before reading this book?
- The author infers that standing alone—even when the stance is unpopular—reveals an inner virtue of goodness and courage and that the desire to belong to a pack leads to a

mentality that becomes evil. From your own experience, describe when you have seen this “pack mentality” in action and when you have seen isolated acts of courage.

- Although it is a memoir, *Alone among the Living* has been compared to coming-of-age novels. At what point(s) in the narrative do you believe that Dickey comes of age?
- The story is told in what can be described as a frame narrative. The author ends the book by taking the reader back to the opening pages. If you decided to write a memoir of a time in your life, would you find this structure effective in framing your own story? Where would you begin your own narrative? What other structures might you use?
- How do the characters and themes in Hoard's novels relate to his memoir?
- At what point does the author no longer feel that he is "Alone among the Living"?
- After the author has a spiritual awakening, what does he understand about his past actions and how does he seek to rectify them? How does his request for forgiveness from Elana Rosemont lead back to the beginning of the book?