

The Dangerous Edge of Things

Questions for Discussion

1. Tai comes to Atlanta to claim an unusual inheritance: a gun shop that caters to Civil War reenactors. What are the social and moral challenges that come with such an inheritance? Does the fact that it's in the South make a difference?
2. Tai is from Savannah, a much smaller city than Atlanta with very different rhythms. How does this affect the decisions she makes concerning the crime she's soon confronted with?
3. Tai describes Atlanta as a "city too big for its britches" and "always going up, Atlanta was, always something higher and better." How does Atlanta's identity work with or against Tai's idea of who she is?
4. As an amateur sleuth, Tai has no real authority to investigate Eliza's death. Why do you think she does so?
5. Trey is unhappy with Tai's investigating at first, but later seems to change his mind. Why?
6. The dynamic between Tai and Trey is often tension-filled, yet they seem to work well together. Why do you think that is?
7. Trey is an unusual sleuth--his most useful skill, his ability to detect lies, is also his biggest handicap. How does this paradox play out in his investigation, and in his relationship with Tai?
8. The major friendships in this story—between Tai and Rico, and between Trey and Garrity—are somewhat strained. Does this affect how Tai and Trey proceed with their investigations? With each other?
9. Trey's ability to function in the world depends on his ability to inhabit an identity very different from his life before the car accident, an identity he chose from a magazine. Is this a process unique to him? Or do we all choose personas?
10. Garrity shares a lot of inside law enforcement information with Tai—although he doesn't break any official rules in doing so, he is under no obligation to share what he knows with this woman he's just met. Why do you think he does this?
11. Images of empty space reoccur in the story. At one point, Tai looks at Trey across the front seats of his car and realizes there is a gulf far wider than a few feet of leather upholstery. Why is it so hard for either of them to breach this gap?

12. Trust is a limited—and complicated—resource for the characters in this story. What does it mean to each of them? Do their definitions contradict?

13. The South is often defined as a rural place without a lot of diversity, but Atlanta bucks these stereotypes by being both urban and diverse. How do these ideas about what “the South” is play out against its reality? How do these characters meet or defy these stereotypes?

14. Reminders of the South’s history—especially that of the American Civil War and of Atlanta’s key role in the Civil Rights movement—are everywhere in the city. As a former tour guide, Tai finds such history fascinating, but how does history play a larger role in understanding contemporary life, especially in criminal justice matters?