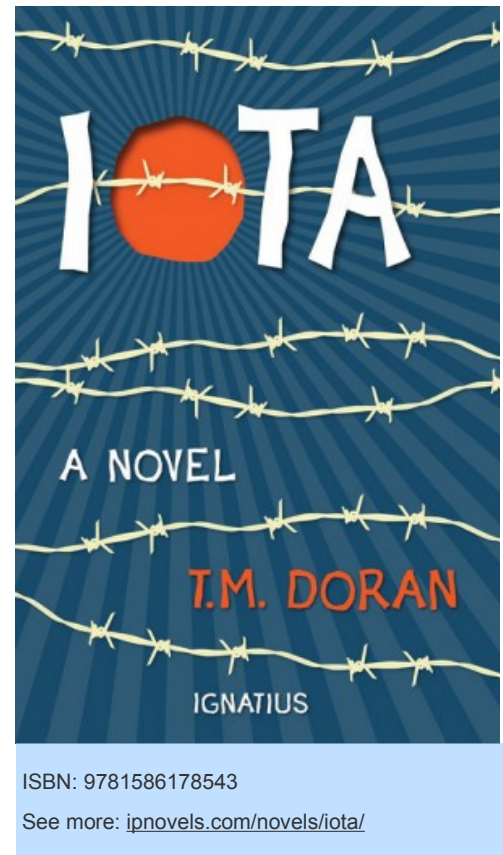


Discussion Questions for *Iota*

1. What does the *Iota* book cover/jacket signify?
2. What is the significance of the title of the book? How is the word used in the story?
3. What are the chief themes of the novel?
4. Why do you think the setting was a temporary detention facility rather than a concentration camp? What is the significance of the former use of the building?
5. What do you think *Iota* reveals about the human condition?
6. In what ways do the cages speak to the interior states of the prisoners?
7. Why do you think *Iota* is such a short novel? Are there other short novels you would compare to *Iota*?
8. Which character surprised you the most? Most attracted you? Most repulsed you?
9. What is your most vivid scene in the story, and why?
10. How can Jan's experience in the prison be considered a severe examination of conscience?
11. How does Jan's image of himself evolve inside the detention facility? What things affect this change?
12. What do Jan's memories of his newspaper colleague, Cermak, and of Frantiska's friend, Anicka, reveal about him?
13. What do the visits of David Ben and Maratino reveal to Jan?
14. What does the thread in the story involving Jan's father tell you about who Jan is now?
15. What did you learn about Frantiska from Jan? Is she embodied by anyone in the story?
16. How would you describe the major? Is there more to the major than meets the eye? What does the information the major discloses about his time at Purdue reveal about him?
17. What do the conversations about old Heydrich reveal about Jan and the major?
18. How does the major's attitude toward Jan change as the story progresses, and why?
19. How do the prisoners relate to Petrenko? How is Petrenko's relationship with the major different than the other prisoners?
20. How does Petrenko's perspective differ from the other prisoners, possibly excepting Chan?
21. What does Chan's plant tell you about Chan, the major, and Petrenko?
22. What is your impression of Katrina? A slandered prisoner? A pawn? A scheming mastermind?
23. What is the significance of the climber and the old man?
24. Why do you think there is only one major character who isn't given a name?



25. It is said in the story that these prisoners were brought together for a reason? What is your perception of this reason? For which characters are reasons for their detention revealed or suggested?
26. Does the history described in the story match your perception of that time and place? Do you have a different understanding after reading the story?
27. Which characters do you think undergo the greatest change as the story progresses?
28. How is Jan in the last chapter different from Jan in the detention facility?
29. What are some similarities and differences between *Iota* and *The Count of Monte Cristo*?
30. *Iota* isn't a mystery story but there are mysteries embedded in the story. What surprised you most?
31. One of the book's endorsements states: "In the end, we learn what we ought to do by not doing what we set out to do?" What do you think this means?
32. A reviewer calls *Iota* "A powerful, intense little package of dynamite". Did you experience any "dynamite" in the story?
33. In an early version of the story, the title was depicted phonetically. Why do you think the author did this?