The **NULL** in the preceding example is in the title column. Some database systems explicitly write the word NULL and some leave a blank.

**NULL** is more than an empty value. NULL means “information is missing.” Therefore you can’t compare anything to NULL:

sqlite> **SELECT 1=1;**  
1=1  
----------  
1  
sqlite> **SELECT NULL=NULL;**  
NULL=NULL  
----------

If you can’t compare null to anything, how can you write queries like one to find the authors with no books? It would be reasonable to think that this would work:

[**Click here to view code image**](ch13_images.html#p385pro01a)

sqlite> **SELECT first\_name, last\_name, title**  
**FROM author**  
**LEFT JOIN book ON author\_id=author.id**  
**WHERE title = NULL;**

However, this won’t work because even if the title were NULL it can’t be compared to NULL. SQL implements a keyword named **IS NULL** for this case, with a corresponding **IS NOT NULL** to look for values that are not **NULL**.

[**Click here to view code image**](ch13_images.html#p385pro02a)

sqlite> **SELECT first\_name, last\_name, title**  
**FROM author**  
**LEFT JOIN book ON author\_id=author.id**  
**WHERE title IS NULL;**  
first\_name  last\_name        title  
----------  ---------------  -----------------------------------  
Ada         Lovelace