

Reading Group Guide - Fade to Black

Reading Group Guide for Fade to Black by Alex Flinn

1. What do you think Daria saw on the morning of October 27? Did she misunderstand what she saw, or did she merely have difficulty communicating with the police?
2. In the early chapters, both Alex and Daria speak of feeling invisible or ignored. Does Clinton share this feeling? Why or why not? Do you see kids at school being treated like they're invisible, and for what reason?
3. Alex describes Clinton as his "arch nemesis" and Clinton would probably agree that the two boys have little in common. Is this true? In what ways are Alex and Clinton alike? How are they different?
4. How does Clinton justify his treatment of Alex at the beginning of the book? Does he change this attitude by the end, or does he merely agree with Alex to get out of trouble?
5. Why do Alex's parents encourage him to lie about how he contracted HIV? How does this make him feel? Why does he want to tell the truth?
6. Would it bother you, as it did Clinton, to have to sit next to Alex in class? Why? Did your attitude change after reading this book?
7. Alex debates whether to tell the truth about Clinton's involvement in the crime. Do you think he would have been justified in lying? Why? What would you do in his situation?
8. Why do you think the author chose to tell the story through three different characters' eyes? In what ways might the story have been told differently if it were told in only one viewpoint? Do you think the "truth" is affected by who is seeing it?
9. Why do you think the author chose Daria as a narrator for the story? What does her narrative add?
10. In what ways, if any, do the viewpoint characters grow in the course of the story? Which character do you think experiences the most growth?
11. Why does Jennifer tell Alex the story about her experiences with her father?
12. Discuss the relationships Alex, Clinton, and Daria have with their families? How are these relationships similar and different? In what ways do these relationships change in the course of the book?

13. Did you feel sympathetic toward Clinton? What factors, if any, made him a sympathetic character?
14. How do people at the school react to the crime against Alex? Do you think this is how you or people you know would react to a similar crime?
15. Why is Jennifer drawn to Alex? Why does she talk to Clinton about him at school? Why does Alex get angry at her for doing so?
16. What do you think would have happened if Clinton had never been accused of the baseball bat incident but, instead, had been picked up for throwing the rock? Would the outcome have been different? What would the relationship between the two boys have been if Clinton had been accused only of the crime he actually committed?
17. Alex dislikes Pinedale, yet doesn't want to leave when his mother says they will go back to Miami. Why? How does his attitude toward Pinedale change during the course of the book? What factors contribute to this change?
18. At the end of the book, Daria says, "Mama says I am still a hero." Is she? In what way?
19. What is Alex's attitude toward Daria? Does it change in the course of the book? Why and how?
20. If the three characters were unable to settle their differences but were, instead, required to testify under oath in a court of law, what would the likely outcome be?

AlexFlinn.com