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Response Journal

Reflections: A Student Response Journal



My Darling,
My Hamburger
Paul Zindel

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Response Journal

To The Student

Although we may read a novel, play, or work of non-fiction for enjoyment, each time we read one, we are building and practicing important basic reading skills. In our ever-more complex society, in which reading has become more and more crucial for success, this, in itself, is an important reason to spend time reading for enjoyment.

Some readers, however, are able to go beyond basic reading techniques and are able to practice higher thinking skills by reflecting on what they have read and how what they read affects them. It is this act of reflection—that is, stopping to think about what you are reading—that this journal is attempting to encourage.

To aid you, we have included writing prompts for each section; however, if you find something that you wish to respond to in the book more compelling than our prompts, you should write about that. We hope you enjoy reading this book and that the act of responding to what you have read increases this enjoyment.

After you read the indicated sections, choose the questions to which you will respond. Keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers to these prompts, and there is no one direction in which you must go.

Chapter 1

1. Like Maggie, a number of students don't like physical education class because it can mess up their appearance. How do you feel about it?
2. What are your first impressions of Liz and Maggie? Think of some adjectives that describe them. What do you think of their friendship? Can you remember specific details that made you feel one way or the other? How would you respond to Maggie's questions if you were Liz, or Liz's answers if you were Maggie?
3. Some of the girls' language and school routines might be different from yours. If you find this to be true, list some differences. Then try to list some similarities. Can you think of reasons to explain the differences or similarities? What are some advantages and disadvantages of writing a book about teenagers?
4. How do the girls seem to feel about school? Is it a social arena, an academic institution, or both? Do they willingly spend time there?

Chapter 3

9. After observing people who looked depressed or grotesque to him, Sean decided “life was one huge pathetic waste.” If a depressed friend said this to you, what would you say to cheer him or her up?

10. What do you think of Sean’s characterization of Liz as “a frightened animal”? Does it say anything about Sean himself?

11. Comment on some of the details in this chapter. Why does Sean notice the structure made of toothpicks in the convenience store? What might he be feeling when he sees the rabbits? What might Liz, Maggie, and Dennis be feeling?

12. What do you think of Maggie and Dennis now? Where is their relationship headed? List some details that make you feel one way or the other.

13. The author hasn’t directly told us a great deal about Liz, but has given us some hints. What can you infer about Liz, her personality, and her home life? Is she turning out to be the person you thought she was going to be?

14. When Liz and Sean walk on the beach, Sean notes that Liz’s voice is “Too energetic. Too quick.” He thinks to himself, “She must have had another fight at home.” Based on what you know of Liz and her mother, construct a dialogue that may have occurred between them.

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26. If you were Liz's friend and understood how she felt, what advice would you give her about the pressure Sean is putting on her? What would you tell Sean?
27. Sean seems to be saying, "If you loved me, you would." Liz seems to respond, "If you loved me, you wouldn't keep pressuring me." Do they both believe what they tell each other? With whom do you identify? Is this a common situation?

Chapter 6

28. The letter from Liz to Sean makes up the whole of this chapter. Do you feel we get to know Liz more from this letter than from descriptions of her in previous chapters?
29. Liz says that she doesn't think she is being "egotistical." Do you agree with her? Do you think Sean will change his mind if he reads this letter?

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46. Liz hated the saleswoman on sight. Was there ever anyone you hated on sight? While it's stupid to hate someone for the way he or she looks, and we know it, we do it anyway. Why?

Chapter 11

47. What is ironic about Mrs. Palladino's comment to Liz at the beginning of this chapter? What would happen if Liz really "discussed her plans" with her mother and stepfather?
48. Maggie thinks of the word "murder" over and over. What do you think is going on in her mind? How is her way of dealing with the upcoming crisis different from Liz's?
49. Liz thinks she can hide her pregnancy from her mother. Assume Liz's mother has found out. Write out the dialogue that occurs between the two of them.
50. Assume you are Dennis, and Maggie has just broken your date to the prom. Write Maggie a note explaining how you feel about her action.
51. Is Dennis more upset because he can't go to the prom with Maggie or because he is reminded of his own flaws? If you were Dennis, what would you say to Maggie about breaking your date?