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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 One

1. Dallas is proud to resemble her mother, whose wild lifestyle caused her early death. Dallas' father, however, makes disparaging remarks about his wife's capricious behavior. Who do you take after in your family, whether physically or behaviorally? Write a short paragraph explaining the ways in which you resemble your relative.
2. Dallas is undaunted by her boyfriend's notorious reputation. In fact, she finds his dangerous behavior exciting. Think of another character from a book or movie that is attracted to someone because of his or her reckless behavior. Create a diary entry in which you answer the following questions about the character:
 - A. Why do you suppose the character is attracted to a dangerous person?
 - B. How does the wild person treat the character?
 - C. Do you believe that this character's situation is common in real life? Why or why not?
3. Dallas likes to do wild things, which she calls skating, purely for the excitement. She steals, for instance, for the thrill and not for the merchandise, which she stows away in her drawer. Write a letter to Dallas explaining how you feel about her behavior. How might her actions now affect her future? What might the consequences of her behavior be.
4. For the first time in her life, Dallas feels special because she belongs to a group. She gains a sense of security and comfort from her friends that she cannot find elsewhere. Can you relate to Dallas' feelings? Write about a group or club, either at school or somewhere else, in which you or someone you know participated. Describe the group and explain if there were any advantages or disadvantages to belonging.

Chapter Three

10. There is a long list of rules at the Girls' Rehabilitation Center, some of which seem extreme to Dallas. Think about the rules at your school regarding behavior and academics. Choose two rules that you consider either too strict or not strict enough. Write a brief paragraph about each rule explaining how you feel each should be revised and why.
11. Damaris is in the Girls' Rehabilitation Center because she ran drugs for her abusive boyfriend. Her face is bruised from a beating he gave her, but she claims to still love him. Pretend that you are Damaris' close friend, and write a letter to her offering advice on what to do about her relationship. Keep in mind the reasons that Damaris stays in an abusive relationship, and try to reason with her.
12. Shatasia, Dallas' roommate, had a baby when she was fifteen years old. Dallas is surprised that someone so young would want to be a parent; and she tries to imagine how an infant would change her life. Create a list of ten ways that having a baby would change your life.
13. The following conversation takes place between Dallas and her father:

“I hope someday you'll see that what I did was for your own good. You won't listen to me or do what I ask you to. Maybe in here you can learn something.”

“Learn what? My roommate for the past three weeks was a genuine nut case, not that you ever bothered to find that out, and I'm sure there are more of them in here. What am I supposed to learn from them?”

In your opinion, is the Girls' Rehabilitation Center more damaging than rehabilitating? Write an editorial for your school paper that argues the pros and cons of rehabilitation centers for adolescents. Try to provide at least two positive and two negative factors. Also, provide an alternative form of rehabilitation that you believe may provide effective reformation.

Chapter Eighteen

53. Soledad has trouble convincing the girls about the facts of rape; their realities do not coincide with Soledad's teachings. The girls do not understand that they are victims even if the man is an acquaintance. Write about a character from a book or movie that does not understand that he or she is a victim of a crime or injustice. Describe the incident that occurs and the character's reaction. Also, explain what you would do if you were the character.
54. Shatasia is determined to stay out of trouble so that she may be reunited with her daughter. Although she is leaving the rehabilitation center, Shatasia still has a few months in a group home before she is released. Think of something that you accomplished through hard work and dedication. Create a diary entry about your achievement, and explain how you felt when you were done.

Chapter Nineteen

55. The new class assignment is titled, "Write Five Wonderful Things About Yourself." Complete the assignment by creating a list about yourself.
56. Chapter nineteen is extremely short—only three pages long—and has no major action. Why do you suppose Jean Ferris made this chapter so short? What is its purpose? What happens to Dallas in this chapter? Explain your answers using complete sentences.

W r a p - u p

66. The conflict between Dallas and her father is ongoing in *Bad*, and the novel ends without a resolution. Who do you sympathize with more: Dallas or her father? Explain your answer in a paragraph, and include evidence from the text to support your view.
67. *Bad* is written in first person, which limits the perspective of the story. In your opinion, would the story be better if it had been written in third person omniscient? Explain the pros and cons of each viewpoint.
68. What are your most and least favorite parts of *Bad*? Also, who are your most and least favorite characters? Explain your answers in complete sentences, and include examples from the text to support your response.
69. The coming of age theme is prominent in *Bad*. Choose two examples from the novel that support the theme and describe them in a paragraph.
70. What do you suppose Jean Ferris' intention was when she wrote *Bad*? For instance, did she intend to teach a lesson, and to whom? Do you believe that she was successful? Write a literary review of the novel that addresses these specific topics. The review should not exceed two pages in length.