

Book Club Discussion Guide



We Were Liars by E. Lockhart, Page 1 (May 2022)

We Were Liars

By E. Lockhart

About the author:

I am the author of the #1 New York Times bestseller *We Were Liars* and its prequel, *Family of Liars*. Other novels: *Whistle: A New Gotham City Hero*, *Again Again*, *Genuine Fraud*, *Fly on the Wall*, *Dramarama*, *The Disreputable History of Frankie Landau-Banks* and the Ruby Oliver quartet: *The Boyfriend List*, *The Boy Book*, *The Treasure Map of Boys*, and *Real Live Boyfriends*. *How to Be Bad* was co-written with Lauren Myracle and Sarah Mlynowski.

Disreputable History was a Printz Award honor book and a finalist for the National Book Award. *We Were Liars* won the Goodreads Choice Award and was Amazon's #1 YA novel of 2014. *Genuine Fraud* is a Times bestseller and was a finalist for the Los Angeles Times book prize.

I have a doctorate in English literature from Columbia University. My field was 19th-century British novel. In 2013 I chaired the committee on Young People's Literature for the National Book Awards.

Source: Author's website: (<http://www.emilylockhart.com/>)

About this book:

A beautiful and distinguished family.
A private island.
A brilliant, damaged girl; a passionate, political boy.

Book Club Discussion Guide



We Were Liars by E. Lockhart, Page 2 (May 2022)

*A group of four friends—the Liars—whose friendship turns destructive.
A revolution. An accident. A secret.
Lies upon lies.
True love.
The truth.*

Source: Author's website: (<http://www.emilylockhart.com/>)

Discussion Questions:

1. Describe the Sinclairs. In what ways are their family experiences unique? In what ways are they like most other families? How do they deal with deaths, addictions, and the tragedies that afflict all types of families?
2. In what ways does her father's abandonment of their family impact Cadence? What can be inferred about his choice to no longer live as part of the Sinclair family?
3. Consider Cadence's narration. Though she freely admits she remembers little and is on a number of medications, do you believe her version of the story?
4. What role does Cadence's grandfather play in the story? How does his role as patriarch of the family define the choices made by his children and grandchildren? To what extent is he to blame for the shortcomings of others?
5. When describing her aunt's divorce, Cadence states, "I don't know what happened. The family never speaks of it." In what ways does the family's curtain of politeness paralyze them?

Book Club Discussion Guide



We Were Liars by E. Lockhart, Page 3 (May 2022)

6. When Cady falls in love with Gat, their relationship and his role as an outsider to the family threatens to overturn the social order. In your opinion, what is the real danger of their relationship? To whom?
7. Discuss the significance of the title, *We Were Liars*. In what ways does it accurately describe the events and relationships portrayed in the novel?
8. How does the author's use of Shakespeare's *King Lear* and Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* influence the story?
9. Compare the parent/child relationships in the story. To what extent are the relationships of these characters shaped by the world around them? To what extent do their relationships shape that world?
10. Consider the moral questions raised by this novel. How are racism, land ownership, inheritance, materialism, greed, and manipulation handled by Lockhart? In your opinion, in what ways do these elements enrich the story?
11. Do you believe the Liars were justified in any way to commit the crime they committed? Was the crime successful in any way?
12. Was the ending a surprise, or did you see it coming? Return to earlier passages in the book and locate instances of Lockhart's use of foreshadowing of events to come.
13. What do you feel Cadence comes to learn at the end of the novel? In your opinion, what insights are gained?
14. What five words would you use to describe *We Were Liars*?

Source: Author's website: (<http://www.emilylockhart.com/>)